



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 33 – Number 7

November 2015

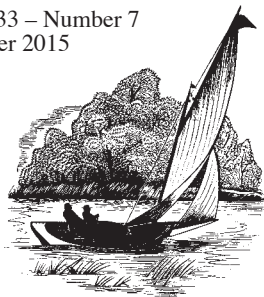
Special Features This Issue
Minot's Light Roundabout – A Yukon Canoeing Expedition
Around Blue Hill Bay and Swan's Island
On a Quiet Island of Our Own – The Last Day of Summer
The Birthing of *Miss Kathleen* – Building a Small Sailboat



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

Well, November turned up here in early October as I write this. After high 80s brought September to a close, mid 50s arrived the first of October signaling the coming end of our on the water season (other than for those of you enjoying Florida's and southern California's eternal summers). The abrupt seasonal change was emphasized on our Atlantic seaboard by a major rain/wind storm that caused the last minute cancellation of the annual Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival at St Michael's, Maryland, a first I believe in its 30 plus years.

My own on the water season in 2015 didn't happen, it consisted of just a single outing paddling with friend Charlie on a smallish lake near his home in July. Since I got into my 80s a half dozen years ago I have limited my small boating to weekly kayaking on flatwater rivers and lakes with Charlie. As with my other ongoing activities, this is a voluntary choice to avoid situations that may become more than I care to, or can, handle. Paddling the nearby ocean, whose ever changing sea conditions once offered varying degrees of challenge, became increasingly a case of facing up to varying degrees of obstacles to be avoided.

Charlie and I operate afloat and ashore (on our pedal trikes) as the "Geezer and the Gimp," his disability (low level quadriplegic) and my age seem to have made us a good match over now some 20 years. This year Charlie has been pretty much confined to home as caregiver for his 97 year old mother. The odd couple of hours he can get away at any one time do not provide the necessary time (about six to eight hours) for to and fro travel to our favored paddling spots. Keeping our weekly activities together ongoing was more important to me than looking for other paddling partners, so we ended up continuing our winter season shop work (this year designing and building a four wheel-drive off road electric wheelchair) in his home workshop.

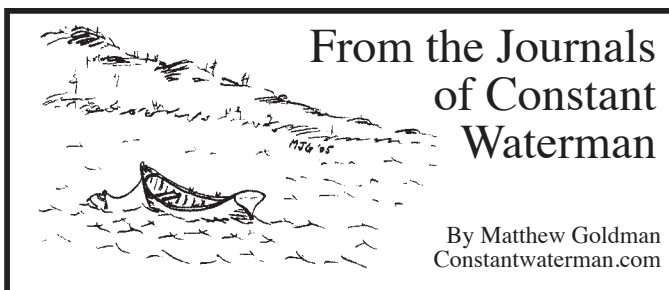
My typical week includes three play days, one with Charlie, one with friend Harvey (some of whose photos have been appearing on our pages recently) on weekly 30-45 mile rides on our recumbent trikes and a third (usually on the weekend as my buddies are still gainfully employed) riding New England's back roads on our motorcycles. I enjoy being able to indulge in all of these activities and their attendant companionship. With four days left over for other stuff, a major portion of them is devoted to getting out this magazine every month. All the rest of life's everyday chores just have to wait until I find time to fit them in. I'm not heading into the home stretch of my life immersed in daily life's trivial tasks.

Some might ask, "what about family?" Right. Well, Jane and I have worked together daily since we launched our first magazine in 1959 and continue to do so (now 56 years and counting). Daughter Rob does our vital electronic formatting of *MAIB* each month so we see one another often. Son Rick lives and works nearby and we see him often. All five grandchildren (12 to 33 in age) are nearby and part of our everyday life. So we have no need for formal visits with one another.

I have come to realize that carrying on with this magazine over now 33 years has been the major aspect of my years of messing about in boats. All of the actual messing about in the boats themselves I've done since 1978 has been supplementary to this main focus. My gradual descent in recent years to the quiet level of paddling in which I now indulge has not brought with it any regrets. Charlie and I enjoy exploring small backwaters in our kayaks as they do indeed provide us with a way to see and experience our surrounding environment unattainable by any other means. Having to miss out on this for the past year has been taken in stride by both of us and we anticipate returning to it when Charlie's circumstances again permit.

On the Cover...

Regular contributor Dick Winslow joins us in this issue with his tale of a summer's wilderness canoeing adventure in the Yukon. He has this to say by way of introduction to his report: "Summit Lake was a blue sheet of frigid water, cupped in the mountains with cliffs and pinnacles along shore. If one loves scenery, I had come to the right place, a dreamlike enchanting vista before me. Above and beyond the history, geography, and scenery, why was I here? I was here because I love the caribou." There's a lot more starting on page 8.



From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman
Constantwaterman.com

Seems the season - the boating season, that is - is winding down. Went to a shindig at the boat club and everyone was talking about how their boats are up on the hard and what, maybe, they might just do next summer. Me, I've got my boats - both of 'em - in the water still. I'll sail MoonWind over to Noank to winter wet, and row the Whitehall over the next fair day. Supposed to be blowing thirty knots next weekend - not great rowing weather.

People ask, don't you ever get ice in your slip at Noank? Doesn't yours loop get iced in? Most I've seen is a couple of inches, three or four winters back. All I did was bust it up with a vagrant two by four. Seems in the past they used to have real winter. Folks at the yacht club were talking Sunday about their fathers walking across the sound to Fishers Island, two miles and more offshore. I've heard tell of people driving their cars across. Musta been back at the end of the previous ice age - maybe twelve thousand years ago - give or take a woolly mammoth or two.

Anyway, the temperature here in Connecticut is more redolent of April than of November - high fifties during the day, just above freezing at night. Another week and it ought to be sugaring weather.

Took MoonWind home to Noank yesterday. Motor started with no complaints and enjoyed the fresh tank of fuel. I bent on my smaller genoa and left the mainsail covered. There seemed to be almost no breeze. The harbor was so placid that when I removed all my mooring lines, Moonwind just sat like a satiated duck with her head beneath her wing.

"Time to get up and fly, Lass," I said, and gentled her out of her slip. We motored round Pine Island and I clambered forward and hoisted the genoa jib. There was barely breeze enough to keep it filled. I turned off the motor and watched the tide negate any progress

we made. And the breeze blew out of the east - the way I needed to go. After fifteen minutes of flopping about, I dropped the jib and turned the motor back on. Some days it hardly pays to hoist my sails. I motored out to the west side of North Dumpling and looked about.

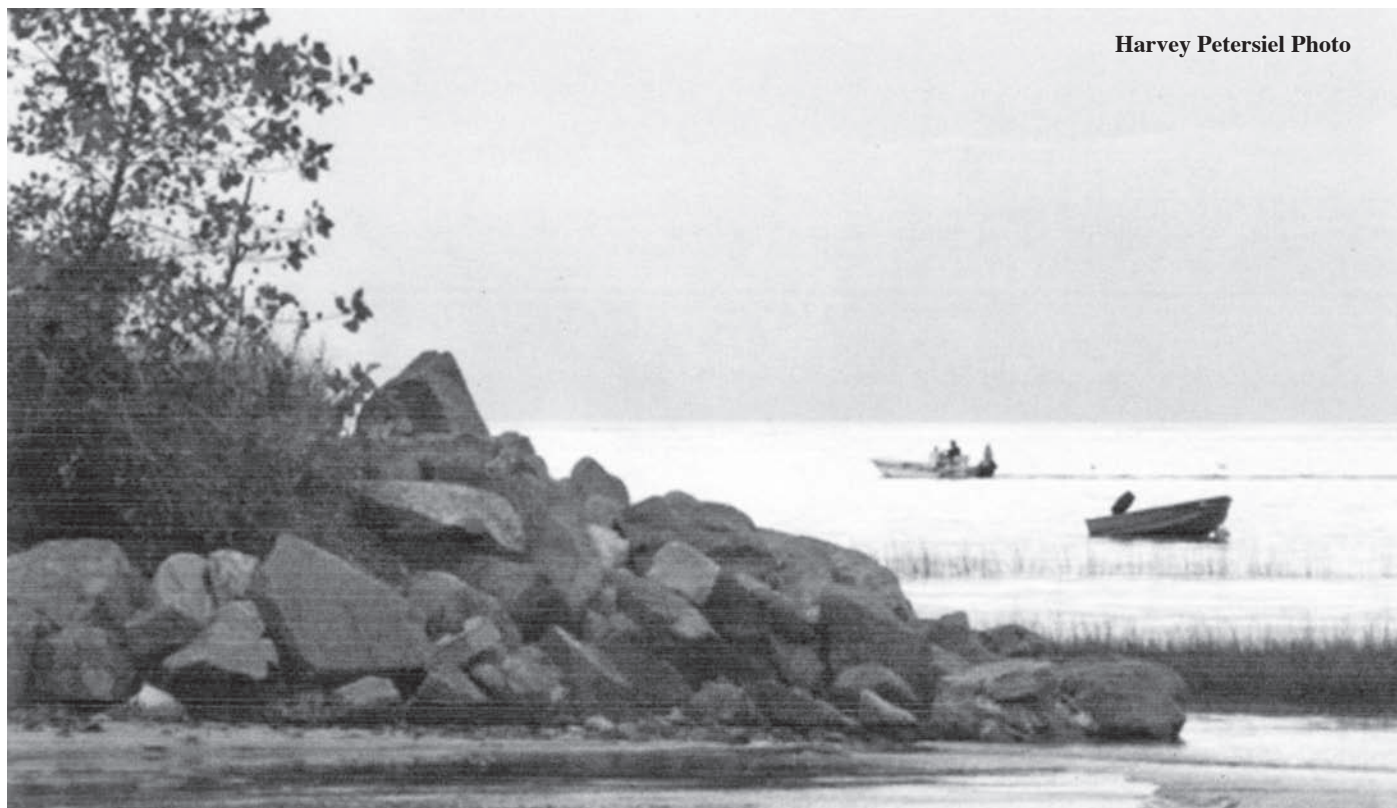
A bit of haze limited my visibility to maybe six miles but, even so, I could plainly discern eight lighthouses of the ten visible from this point. To see the Stonington, CT lighthouse, now a museum, I need a clear day and maybe binoculars. The alternating red and white flashing lights from Watch Hill Light can be seen even on an overcast day when the building itself appears indistinct. Latimer Reef, between Stonington and Fishers Island, can be seen for miles. I could also see, with my naked eye, Morgan Point Light at Noank, North Dumpling, close aboard, and Race Rock Light. Little Gull Light, maybe six miles west, just east of Plum Island, I had to strain to locate. Ledge Light at the mouth of the Thames, New London Harbor light on the New London Shore and Avery Point Light on the opposite bank stood two to three miles off. On a clear day, all ten of these are readily discernible.

Thanksgiving morning I took advantage of the tide and another windless day to move my Whitehall. A five-mile row before I gorge on too much Thanksgiving dinner can be a good thing - it whets the edge of gluttony and fosters true thankfulness. Or perhaps we should all go rowing after our feast. Burn off a few hundred calories so we needn't let out our trousers.

Fishers Island Sound proved merely a millpond - water so still I could see my reflection - always cause for alarm. The still, still surface was punctuated by fowl: loons, and mergansers, and cormorants by the dozens, and other birds I couldn't identify, not having had the foresight to remember my field glasses.

I rounded Bluff Point, crossed Mumford Cove, rounded Groton Long Point and traversed the depth of West Cove to the marina. This winter I have the luxury of a double slip all to myself. Moon Wind and the Whitehall share a dance hall between two finger piers. Other years I've tucked the Whitehall underneath MoonWind's bow, but I needed to take great pains when docking not to trample my dinghy. Unless I rig a cover on the Whitehall, I'll have to haul her before she fills with sleet and snow and ice. At least she's easy to launch again if I feel the need of a row come February. Messers About never quite know just when such an urge may overtake them.

Matthew Goldman, aka Constant Waterman, Author and Illustrator (860) 912-5886, matthew@constantwaterman.com. To view and purchase my books and cards please visit <http://www.constantwaterman.com>



Harvey Petersiel Photo



You write to us about...

Adventures & Experiences...

Scouting Misadventure

Eric Dietrich, CEO of Liquid Culture and Rudy Socha (CEO of Wounded Nature - Working Veterans) met with Fish and Wildlife Service and left knowing that there would be some challenges on our September 12 cleanup inside the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge, South Carolina. Depending on the draft of the boat, access in and out of some areas requires timing based on the tides. We landed and left at Lighthouse and Cape Islands without any problems. However, as we were getting ready to leave the area of the refuge we were in before the tide went too far out, we spotted a boat with six adults and two children that was stranded. We stopped to assist. The time spent working to dislodge this boat delayed us just long enough that we could not make it all the way through tpart of Cape Romain Bay to reach the creek channel. As a result we spent the next five hours playing in the mud, napping and calling people and asking them to send beer while we waited for the tide to return. Susan Gregory (Boeing C-17 Engine Management) and Charlotte Dietrich (Eric's daughter) were real troopers and we actually had a fun and interesting time watching this bay transform with the tide change.

Rudy Socha, <http://woundednature.org/rudy@woundednature.org>



A Swimmer Tries Messing About in a Boat

First of all, lemme admit that I am a swimmer, a lifelong, strong, long distance swimmer from a family of strong, long distance swimmers. When my partner Boyd offered to buy my first boat, we went to Collinsville Canoe & Kayak because the owner, John, had been my sponsor in a Red Cross fundraising 5 1/2 mile swim across Candlewood Lake. John's a big guy, so when he told me that he and his dog fit comfortably in a Pungo kayak, that seemed like a good choice for me.

I rarely used my Pungo that first season choosing, as always, to swim whenever possible. Late that summer, or early that fall, my

friend Sandy asked me to join her kayaking across Bantam Lake, up Bantam River. We enjoyed the long paddle, spotting lots of herons, beavers and other wildlife and appreciating autumn foliage reflected in the water. Although we had plenty of room to maneuver, every so often, I would unintentionally broadside Sandy's kayak with mine, she would accuse me of paddling like a pirate and we would have a good laugh.

The sun was setting when we returned to the dock at Boyd's cottage. I asked Sandy the best way to exit my kayak. She suggested going alongside the dock and pulling myself up. I gave a halfhearted attempt and we began laughing at my unsuccessful manatee roll technique. Sandy then coached me to try paddling into shore and climbing out by steadying myself with my paddle, which might have worked if I hadn't had to pee so badly and had been laughing so hard.

Just then a guy in a canoe, fishing nearby, whom we had never even noticed with all our merriment, called over to us, "I wish you two would cheer up." That did it! I doubled over in laughter and ended up stretched out in the water. I am, after all, a swimmer.

Molly Wright, Collinsville, CT

Information of Interest...

Narrow Passage 14

Here is a photo and the specs on my latest ultralite canoe, the Narrow Passage 14.

Length 13'8"

Width at Gunwales 26"

Width at Waterline 23"

Depth at Center 10.5"

Weight 22lbs

Frame

Spruce Gunwales and Keel Stringer

White Pine Stringers

Northern White Cedar Ribs and Stem/Knees

Mahogany/Cedar Backrest and Thwart

Floorboards Douglas Fir

Skin 8oz Polyester

Hilary Russell, Berkshire Boatbuilding School, www.berkshireboatbuildingschool.org



Ocean Storms vs Lobster Traps

So, do you think ocean storms cause turmoil to lobster trap gear? They just gather up all the rope attached to the traps and turn it into a mass of tangled rope and deposit it on the beaches of Winthrop. It must be tough to be a lobsterman and have all of your gear destroyed in a single storm. You couldn't untangle it in a hundred years. This photo was taken on Deer Island, just inside the old Deer Island Lighthouse in Boston Harbor.

Richard Honan, Winthrop, MA



Opinions...

It Just Doesn't Make Much Sense to Me

Reading the article in the August issue about sailing on Plum Island Sound, I noticed that Bob's friend Richard's sailing season started a week before Memorial Day and ended a week after Labor Day. I see this often and all I can wonder is why so short? When I worked at the St Paul Yacht Club I saw over and over that many folks didn't get splashed until the 4th of July and pulled out shortly after Labor Day. I always asked myself, why so short? At that same job I found myself pressure cleaning boats in November that hadn't moved since Labor Day. It just doesn't make much sense to me!

I enjoyed the article about the Nigel Dennis boats in that issue and it reminded me about what is also happening here in Minnesota. Ten to 15 years back there was a real buzz going on in the kayak world. The kayakers who I saw were all motivated to buy the best equipment and take all the proper classes so as to become more proficient at the sport. I was among them using my own inferior homebuilt boats.

Now I go to the lake and all I see are the 10'-12' rotomolded boats that can be bought for the price of a couple of sheets of marine plywood. A few years back kayakers felt that the classes were a necessity to play the game safely. Now there is a mob of "kayakers?" who feel that there is no learning curve. They write a check for \$200 plus or minus, buy the boat that best fits their budget and head to the lake.

This change has also cut into the canoeing world as many seem to think that canoeing is hard to learn and it is easier to jump into a kayak and go. I find that there is no challenge to this new sport. I personally like to strive to become more proficient at any game I choose to play.

Bob Brown, Apple Valley MN

The Sea was Kind

By Albert Klestadt
Davis McKay Company Inc, NY, 1959
Reviewed by John Nystrom

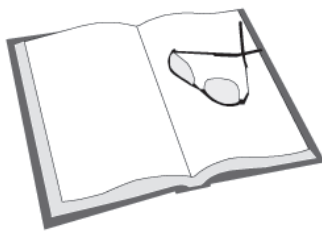
What would you choose, if you were asked to pick the three greatest small boat journeys in history? Joshua Slocum's first single handed circumnavigation of the globe probably makes almost everyone's short list. Slocum's earlier voyage from Brazil back to the US, in a boat he built from salvage from his wrecked ship, might be an even bigger adventure, but the circumnavigation in 1895-1898 is his claim to fame. Whatever you think of Capt William Bligh's reputation (formed mostly by authors influenced by the descendants of Fletcher Christian), his command of an overloaded 23' open launch with 18 occupants on a 3,618 mile "cruise" of the Pacific Ocean has to make most people's lists as well. But what do you do about your third choice?

I have to choose Albert Klestadt, who no one, except probably a few Australian readers, knows. Albert Klestadt (1913-2006) grew up Jewish in Hamburg, Germany, and was taught to sail by his mother. In 1935 he and a brother escaped Nazi Germany as stateless persons with no passports, ending up in Japan. They eventually acquired a boat to sail the Inland Sea. With war obviously (to the author) approaching and the possibility of sailing his boat to safer shores precluded, the author sought to "transfer" employment to Singapore but only made it to Manila before war broke in the Pacific. Albert escapes permanent internment due to the ambiguity of his status, but he knows time is against him. The only solution is sailing to safety in Australia.

Relying on diary, logs and his navigational work sheets, *The Sea was Kind* details a year spent working his way south, acquiring a small island trading boat he can single hand, and sailing south to an adventure that requires as much patience as courage. Adventures and misadventures are told with depreciating humor. In Mindanao Albert, after failing to convince anyone that sailing a small seaworthy boat to Australia is anything short of suicide, acquires an ally, Frank Young, Jr, a half American, half Moro army officer on the run with his family. To make a long (but entertaining) story short, Albert sells his batil, a sloop rigged boat favored by central Philippine traders, and "charters" an open boat of a type and rig that won't stand out in the Sulu Sea and waters south. The boat, by the way, has a crew that can only be charitably described as "Sulu pirates."

I won't spoil the story further, other than to confirm that Albert, Frank and the "crew" make it to Australia. The story would probably been wider known if it had been told during the war, but censorship prevented that. Albert, speaking fluent Japanese and German, was enthusiastically enlisted into the Australian Army and, what with getting on with life after the war, marrying and starting a family in his adopted country of Australia, doesn't get around to writing the story down for publication until 1959. The book had a reprinting in 1960 and publishing credits on the copyright page for most every major English speaking country.

This one, I think, is ripe for reissue, as the only "new" copy available is a 2014



Book Reviews

Kindle edition, edited to American spelling (a shame, I think). Anyway, I latched onto it through interlibrary loan. Originals are available used on Amazon, etc. Albert's obituary in the Australian press was, from what I can gather, a popular read (lined to at http://www.foxsportspulse.com/get_file.cgi?id=2681687).

The obituary necessarily shorts the escape story, misses his escape from Nazi Germany, but covers the rest of his life nicely. If you don't make the effort to find this one, you are missing out. I wonder who has the movie rights? This would make a better movie than a lot of what gets released now days. Just remember, this is one of the top three small boat adventure stories of all time! You have my word.

Ashes Under Water The SS Eastland and the Shipwreck That Shook America

By Michael McCarthy
Lyons Press, Guilford, CT
and Helena, MT, 2014
Reviewed by John Nystrom

I can't summarize the book much better than the author in his opening "Author's Note:"

"This is the true account of America's most notorious ship, the country's most famous attorney and how the least likely of heroes, an immigrant sailor nicknamed "Slim," connected them.

"Perhaps like most people, I had never heard of the *SS Eastland* before. Then one day in 1999 a companion at a restaurant along the Chicago River mentioned that a steamship had tipped over nearby in 1915, killing more passengers than had perished in the *Titanic*.

"I had lived in Chicago for years. How could I never have heard of this? The cause of such an unimaginable disaster, I would learn, was still a mystery, even as theories had piled up for four generations. I began what would become a decade long quest to get to the bottom of it.

"In time I discovered a parable of miserable inequality and injustice and untold national horror.

"That a grand steamship, still tied to its dock, rolled over in the middle of a great city, quickly drowning 844 poor people, infants, women, 22 whole families, most trapped on the ship's underside.

"That efforts to bring the prosperous, guilty shipowners to justice were thwarted by, of all people, the iconic lawyer, Clarence Darrow.

"That the brute skill Darrow used to suppress a confession and other damning evidence had kept the truth about the *Eastland* from coming out for a century."

McCarthy was a journalist when that title actually meant something and *Ashes Under Water* is both great journalism and excellent historical writing. I was generally aware of the event of the *Eastland* disaster, but ignorant of the specifics. The author not only details the history of the ship, but also brings the human dimensions of this tragedy to light by focusing on the passengers, both survivors and those who lost their lives, and on Joseph Erickson, the ship's engineer and immigrant seaman from Norway. Erickson, who emerges as the hero of the whole episode, seems to be the designated scapegoat for the *Eastland*'s owners and might possibly been convicted at trial, except for the maneuvering of Erickson's lawyer, Clarence Darrow. Yes, that Clarence Darrow.

Darrow was possibly the most famous American lawyer of the 20th century and the *Eastland* tragedy and subsequent trial galvanized Chicago and the whole country at the time, so why does Darrow make no mention of this trial in his memoirs?

I hate to break it to a gullible public (actually, I love doing this), but the Clarence Darrow of media fame, crusading progressive labor lawyer, impassioned death penalty foe in the notorious Leopold Loeb case and, dare I say, the noble character a la Spencer Tracy in *Inherit the Wind*, is pretty much a myth, a humbug and a fraud. Darrow was everything we think of when we bring to mind the stereotype "sleazy lawyer," who narrowly avoided prison and disbarment and was never above defending the indefensible, for the right price.

The *Eastland* case is one of those that Darrow's defenders and fans skip over or ignore, just like Darrow did. To be fair, Darrow did defend wrongly accused underdogs like Dr Ossian Sweet and, though he did help spare Joseph Erickson from an unjust conviction in the wake of a national headlines tragedy, it is the fact that he also enabled the clearly guilty to escape justice that motivates both Darrow and his admirers to gloss over this one. In any case, whether you admire or despise Clarence Darrow, the detailing of the investigation and the trial are both fascinating and disturbing. I think Darrow biographers in the future will have to address the *Eastland* case and Darrow's work on the case, the good and the bad, in future works on Darrow's life.

Like any good historical or journalistic work, the works cited, sources and references are properly and well footnoted. Of course, you are free to rip through the text of the story without dwelling on the minutia. I won't spoil the fun by revealing too much, but this book is a winner and a great read. So, whether you are knowledgeable or ignorant of the *Eastland* disaster and Great Lakes shipping in general, this is a book worth reading, and an event worth knowing about. McCarthy now lives in South Haven, Michigan, and I hope to catch one of his talks at the Michigan Maritime Museum on this subject.





Gray skies and fog greeted us as we parked at Sandy Beach in Cohasset for this year's Minot's Light Roundabout, a four and a half mile rowing race out to and around Minot's Lighthouse. My brother Bill and my nephew Matthew joined me for this annual early fall rowing race. Bill and Matt would be rowing my 15' Ducktrap Wherry, the *William & Anthony*, and I was rowing my newly built 16' Adirondack Guide Boat, the *Anna & Emily*. Also joining us was my brother Steve, who had been brought in for his knowledge of the local waters. There were approximately 30 to 40 boats entered in the race, ranging from single rowers, doubles, up to six rowers and a coxswain in the larger boats.

As the morning progressed visibility and sea conditions worsened with fog and a heavy mist. At times the lighthouse, a little over two miles from shore, disappeared completely from sight. The race organizers decided to shorten the length of the race for the single rowers.

The first leg of the race was directly into a stiff east wind and growing seas. By the time we were a mile offshore a heavy mist and the 3' to 4' swells made for some tough going. About this time I had the daylights scared out of me as a large dory that had just rounded the halfway buoy crashed broadside into me, his bow just missing hitting my head

The Minot's Light Roundabout

By Richard Honan

and nearly sinking my boat. The dory had such a high angled bow that it wanted to ride up over my boat, which was so low in the water the bow of the dory nearly hit me in the head. It was going downwind, riding down one the large swells, which made the force of the impact even greater. It wasn't intentional, it's just one of those things that happen in ocean rowing races.

A quick survey of my boat showed no major damage, so I continued rowing to the rounding buoy. My brother Bill and Matthew were less than 25' away and witnessed the crash. Later, when doing some further inspection, I noticed the force of the impact cracked the curved cherry deck coaming. It's probably nothing that I can't repair. Plus, it makes for a good story in the bar.

After rounding the buoy I started the journey back to Sandy Beach. The fog and mist were hindering visibility and, combined with the stiff ESE wind, made it difficult to stay on course. Riding the following seas and

the swells required a lot of concentration. It was very difficult to row and watch where I was headed. Within a half hour of rounding the buoy there were no other boats around me and I was to get a bit disoriented. Just then one of the patrol boats came over to me and aimed me in the right direction. Brother Bill and my nephew Matthew were out there dealing with the same conditions and lack of visibility. Thankfully the race organizers had a good number of patrol boats to assist rowers like me. In a little over a half hour I was safely ashore. My brother Bill and nephew Matthew followed along shortly.

Following the race, the Cohasset Maritime Institute volunteers put on a nice barbecue with hot dogs, potato salad, fruit salad and plenty of desserts. They even had a fairly large 20 piece orchestra playing our favorite tunes. Next up was the awards ceremony where the winners were announced. I finished third in my division and everyone received a commemorative medal.

A big thank you to the Cohasset Maritime Institute and the many volunteers that made the day such a great success. A special thank you to the harbormaster and all the volunteers who manned the patrol boats ensuring that people like me didn't end the race on a beach in Hingham.



The competition.

The committee going over the race course.



Winning the award for "best dressed", Brother Bill and nephew Matthew Honan



Launching my Adirondack Guide Boat, the *Anna & Emily*



Matt and Bill preparing to launch the *William & Anthony*.

...and the band played on!



Minot's Ledge is one of many groups of rocky outcroppings off the coast of Cohasset and Scituate, Massachusetts, and has been the scene of countless shipwrecks. Between 1832 and 1841 there were 40 wrecks on this and neighboring reefs. Between 1817 and 1847 it was estimated that 40 lives and \$364,000 (1800s dollars) in property had been lost in shipwrecks in the vicinity of Minot's Ledge off Cohasset, Massachusetts.

In 1843, Inspector I. W. P. Lewis of the Lighthouse Service emphasized the great need for a lighthouse on Minot's Ledge and his judgment was sustained by Capt William H. Swift of the United States Topographical Bureau, who recommended an iron pile lighthouse as offering less resistance to the waves than a stone tower.

The ledge was barely 20' (6.1m) wide and was exposed at low tide, being dry only two or three hours a day. On this narrow rock construction was begun in the spring of 1847 of a 75' (23m) open work iron light structure. The men could only work on very calm days when the tide was at its ebb. The work was conducted from a schooner, which remained near the ledge, unless the sea was rough, with the workmen sleeping on board. If a storm threatened, the schooner put into Cohasset Harbor until it was over.

Nine holes were drilled into the solid rock, each 12" (300mm) diameter and 5' (1.5m) deep. Eight were placed in a circle, 25' (7.6m) in diameter, with the ninth in the center. Iron piling, 10" (250mm) in diameter were then cemented into each hole. Four men worked in 20 minute shifts at the drilling from a triangle, set on heavy spars, which supported a platform high above the ledge on which the drilling machinery was installed.

All the apparatus was swept from the rock by two different storms in the summer of 1847. Workmen were swept into the sea several times, but none was drowned. Work had to be stopped for the winter in October 1847 and begun again in the spring of 1848, but by September of that year the nine holes had been drilled and the nine iron piles placed. The outer piles angled toward the center to a 14' (4.3m) circumference, 38' (12m) above the uneven surface of the ledge. These were braced horizontally by iron rods at 19' (5.8 m) intervals. Braces planned to strengthen the lower part of the tower were omitted on the theory that they would lessen rather than increase the overall security of the edifice. However, it was where these braces were planned to go that the structure actually broke off later.

A cast iron spider, or capping, weighing five tons was secured to the top of this piling. The keeper's quarters were erected on top of this. Finally a 16 sided lantern room at the very top housed a Fresnel lantern with 15 reflectors. The light, a fixed beacon with an arc of 210°, was first lighted January 1, 1850.

The first keeper, Isaac Dunham, was confident the light structure was not safe and wrote Washington requesting that it be strengthened. When no action resulted he resigned on October 7, 1850. Capt John W. Bennett, who succeeded him, openly scoffed at his predecessor's fears. He hired new assistants including an Englishman named Joseph Wilson and a Portuguese named Joseph Antoine. Two keepers remained at the light at all times.

The braces of the structure were soon showing signs of strain, however, and were constantly having to be removed, taken to

Minot's Light Historical Information

The following is taken from the Coast Guard Historian's web site



the mainland and strengthened and straightened. A terrific northeast storm a few weeks after he took charge changed Bennett's mind and he officially reported the tower as in danger. A committee, delegated to investigate, arrived during a perfectly calm sea and returned to Boston, deciding nothing should be done.

On March 16, 1851, during another terrible storm, the keepers deciding the lantern room was unsafe, retreated down into the storeroom where they cowered for four days and nights, only occasionally climbing to the lantern to repair some damage done by the storm. The violent pitching and swaying of the tower almost knocked them off the rungs of the ladder when they did. A relatively calm spell followed during which the braces were tightened.

Then easterly winds began blowing around April 8, 1851. Bennett departed for the mainland three days later and this was the last time he saw his two assistants alive. When he sought to return next day, too heavy a sea was running at Minot's Ledge to permit the attempt. The storm increased in fury and, by the 16th, was causing considerable damage ashore. At Minot's Ledge the two assistant keepers kept the bell ringing and the lamps burning, but just before midnight on the 16th they cast a bottle adrift containing a message for the outside world in case they failed to survive. The high tide at midnight sent wave after wave through the upper framework of the weakened structure.

What actually happened then will never be known. Probably about 11pm the central support snapped off completely, leaving the top heavy 30 ton lantern tower held only by the outside piling. Then just before 1am on April 17, 1851, the great Minot's Ledge Lighthouse finally slid over toward the sea. One by one the eight iron pilings broke until only three remained. The keepers, probably realizing that the end was near, began pounding furiously on the lighthouse bell. This was heard by residents of the Glades. With the tower bent over, the remaining supports now gave way and the great tower plunged into the ocean.

The body of Joseph Antoine was washed ashore later at Nantasket. Joseph Wilson managed to reach Gull Rock, probably mistaking it for the mainland. Here he apparently died of exhaustion and exposure.

Between 1851 and 1860 Minot's Ledge was guarded by a lightship. Plans for a new stone edifice were meanwhile drawn up for the Lighthouse Board by Brigadier General Joseph G. Totten, model makers built the proposed new structure in miniature, the same location was decided upon and Barton S. Alexander of the United States Engineers started work on its construction in April 1855.

The ledge had to be cut down to receive the foundation stones and space was not available for a regular cofferdam. In June the old stumps of the first tower were removed. Meanwhile cutting and assembling of the granite was done on Government Island in Cohasset, where the lightkeeper's house is. Seven granite blocks were to form the foundation. Permanent iron shafts, 20' (6.1m) high, were set in eight of the holes in which the old lighthouse piling had been, while the ninth or central hole was left open to form a cavity for the base circle. Later a well for drinking water was built up from this cavity through the middle of the new tower.

The framework structure disappeared during a severe storm on January 19, 1857, when the barque *New Empire*, which later went ashore at White Head, struck the temporary tower and demolished the iron scaffolding. So in the spring of 1857 the work had to be started all over again.

The first stone was finally laid July 9, 1857. Temporary cofferdams were constructed from sand bags so that the foundation blocks, laid more than 2' (0.61m) under the surface of the lowest tide, could be cemented to the rock face of the ledge. Strap iron between the courses kept the two ton stones apart while the cement was hardening.

The total appropriation of \$330,000 was all spent, except a small surplus, in the construction. By the end of 1859, the 30 second course, 62' (19m) above low water had been reached and 377 actual crew working hours had been consumed. The final stone was laid June 29, 1860, the whole granite structure having thus taken five years to complete, lacking one day. The new lighthouse was finished by mid August 1860 and the light first exhibited August 22, 1860. The light was not regularly shone, however, until November 15, 1860, when Joshua Wheeler, the new keeper, and two assistants entered upon their duties.

The new stone tower has withstood every subsequent gale. The strongest waves cause nothing but a strong vibration. On some occasions the seas have actually swept over the top of the 97' (30m) structure with no more damage than a few leaky windows or a cracked lamp or two.

On May 1, 1894, a new flashing lantern was installed with the characteristic of a one four three flash, which lovers on shore soon found contained the same numerical count as the words "I love you." Minot's Ledge has thus become known up and down the coast as the "Lover's Light."

The light was made automatic in 1947. Today its 45,000 candela light, 85' (26m) above water, can be seen for 15 miles (24km). The light was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987 as Minot's Ledge Light. It was put up for sale under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act in 2009.



"Dick, they've named a mountain range after you," exclaimed Chris, my guide. We were in the Richardson Mountains, a Canadian extension of Alaska's Brooks Range to the west. In a moment of fantasy I shared the honor with Sir John Richardson, the British surgeon, naturalist and Arctic explorer. Only the mountains were officially named for Richardson in 1825 and I was demoted to a mere Johnny come lately in mid August 2014.

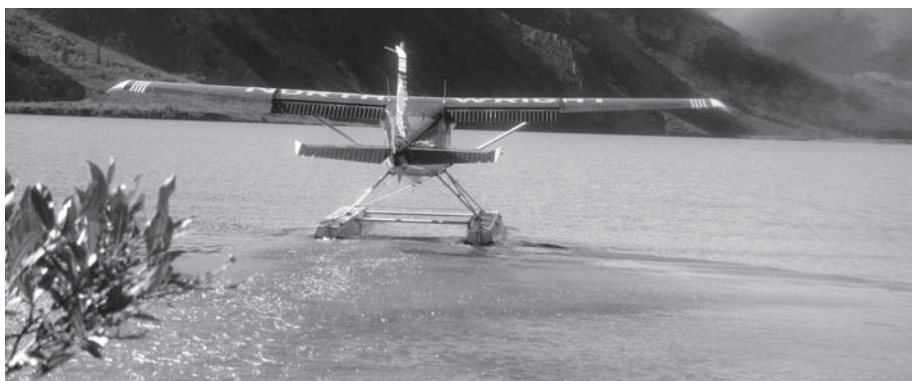
Chris and I were the first two members of our party to land on a pontoon plane at Summit Lake, Yukon Territory, in the Far North. After the bush pilot carried me piggy-back to the shore, Chris and I began to pitch our tent. The bush pilot immediately took off to fly back to Inuvik to pick up the rest of our party, two people per flight.

I was thrilled to be back in the Yukon, my fourth visit to this wilderness of endless sky, land and water. Every time I have been here I have instantly felt a sense of pride at being a Yukoner, even if only for the time being. For me, this expedition would amount to two weeks.

Our purpose, once our party of eight had all assembled, was to put in at Summit Lake and then canoe 210 miles from the lake outlet down the Little Bell, Bell and Porcupine Rivers to the village of Old Crow. John Bell discovered, long after the Native Americans, the Little Bell, Bell and Porcupine Rivers in two separate expeditions in 1842 and 1845. The first two rivers are named for him. The Porcupine was named for less egotistical, and more practical purposes, specifically the Native American Gwich'in word "Ch'oonjik," which translates to "Porcupine Quill River." The Porcupine caribou herd, the world's largest with an estimated 189,000 animals, thus took its name, most conveniently, from the river. The Gwich'in people are a native Athabaskan people living in northwestern North America, mostly above the Arctic Circle.

After the cramped bush plane ride, I was anxious to stretch my legs and breathe

Thanks to the Wright brothers and their invention, bush plane flights are often indispensable for Arctic canoe trips.



A Yukon Canoeing Expedition

Northward Ho for the Migrating Porcupine Caribou Herd

By Richard E. Winslow III

Dedicated to the caribou. As long as they can run, as they have for thousands of years across the Arctic tundra, unimpeded by fences, pipelines, haul roads and oil wells, their indomitable spirit shall remain free.

Only man can stop them.

the chilly, unsullied air, so pure it was almost intoxicating. I wandered over to some maroon shiny leaves and, once on my hands and knees, saw pinched blueberries. During the high summer they were plump and juicy, now hard and shriveled. I tasted one, now reduced to a sour tartness, unfit to swallow so I spit it out. Most of the berries had gone to waste, as fall was fast approaching if not actually here. Winter was roughly a month away.

Summit Lake was a blue sheet of frigid water, cupped in the mountains with cliffs and pinnacles along shore. If one loves scenery, I had come to the right place, a dreamlike enchanting vista before me.

Above and beyond the history, geography and scenery, why was I here? I did not have to think twice about it. Perhaps some individuals would look upon us as fools, paying thousands of dollars and traveling thousands of miles to be bitten by mosquitoes, rained upon, even snowed upon, blown back by headwinds, and threatened by grizzly bears. I have never given a moment's thought to such distractions.

I was here because I love the caribou. Their quick trot exemplifies a sense of freedom and determination which I share. These

handsome heroes and heroines, with their calves, have charged ahead despite obstacles for thousands of years. Like my bonding to the loons as my favorite bird in my native New England, I quickly adopted the caribou as my favorite animal of the North.

I could not relate, by contrast, to other wildlife of the North very well. The grizzly is too dangerous and unpredictable with so much stuck up pride and vanity. The moose is ungainly and awkward with very little common sense. More people by far are killed or injured in the North by charging moose as compared to grizzlies. Several times in Maine a bull moose has run along beside my car as I was driving in rural areas. One was once even on the verge of veering into my vehicle as I accelerated.

The Dall sheep were shy and anti social, avoiding our presence as they scrambled across distant talus slopes. The mountain goats likewise kept to themselves in the high country. The elusive wolves disturbed my sleep with their incessant howling during the night.

The muskoxen were likewise suspicious of human beings and resented our presence. One guide I knew was once creeping up on his hands and knees to photograph a muskox with his camera on what he thought was a telescopic setting. He finally stopped crawling to take his picture, only to discover to his alarm that he was practically on top of the animal, his camera was actually on a standard setting! After an eyeball to eyeball confrontation, both backed off and our guide lived to tell the tale.

As for the mosquitoes and black flies, whether or not I might stoop to classify them as animals, why even bother to explain?

The rest of our canoeing party all shared my compulsion to see the caribou. On our earlier expeditions most of us had viewed a few strays but could not wait to see the Porcupine herd again or, indeed, for the first time. We fully realized that the caribou might be on strike and not show up, or be reduced to a few stragglers, but we were taking that chance. The caribou were looking out for themselves, not us.

Our party of eight had long awaited this caribou tracking search. Chris Marie, the proprietor and head guide of Jack & Son (our professional guide service) was 40 years old and a native of Normandy, France. Chris had begun his guiding career with sea kayak excursions at Baie de Somme, facing the English Channel. But he quickly outgrew any thoughts of remaining permanently in his home waters. The call of the Yukon Territory, Canada, one of the world's prime wilderness areas, soon lured him across the ocean. Once here, he modeled his life on his idol, Jack London, naming his business, Jack & Son after this famous American author. Jack's socialist ideas offered no appeal whatsoever

to Chris, but he embraced London's Klondike adventure stories as if reading the Bible.

The year before this trip, I had arrived in Whitehorse, the capital city of the Yukon, for my first expedition. Chris seized my hand in friendship. "You are my canoe partner," he exclaimed. "We will paddle the Yukon River from Carmacks to Dawson City. The day before we approach Five Fingers Rapids, we'll lash the two canoe hulls together to create a catamaran for safety once we hit the whitewater." We did not dump.

I was happy to return for another trip with a true professional, knowing that I was in safe hands. Chris had already taken the Porcupine trip twice before and he knew it well.

Claude was a Quebecois, a man in his 50s and recently retired from his factory job. An amateur boxer in his youth, he stayed in magnificent shape with daily exercises, often stretching his shoulders with a paddle behind his back. He had recently started his own physical therapy service for the general public. His smile and cheerfulness were infectious. As my tent mate, Claude was always pitching in to help me in every way. "You are my friend," he would say, and we were friends.

Carina was a native of Finland, working in Helsinki as a lawyer specializing in bankruptcy cases and writing legal textbooks. Intelligent, beautiful, outgoing and fluent in several languages, she was everyone's favorite. The complete outdoorswoman, she was fully outfitted on her own, bringing her personal tent, sleeping bag and air mattress. "I have paddled the Nahanni, Wind and the Coppermine Rivers," she said. "I love the Yukon."

Three of Chris's friends from France joined the expedition, a family from outside Paris with a vacation home near the Normandy beaches. Philippe was a physician with 23 years of practice. He brought along his medical kit in case of any emergency. His son Alexandre, in his 20s, was studying in Bordeaux to become a massage health specialist. An accomplished chef, he delighted in preparing gourmet style meals. Mathilde was Philippe's daughter, a teenager, still in school and living at home. She pitched in heartily with all the chores.

Wolfgang was an Austrian businessman, probably in his late 30s. Adept with his hands, he was an expert at tent pitching, canoe assembling and watch mechanics. He and Carina had taken trips together since 2009.

Rounding out this group, I am a librarian from New Hampshire. I first hopped into a canoe in 1943 as an eight year old at Trinity Church Camp on Bow Lake, Strafford, New Hampshire. Both as a camper and a counselor through the years, I have always felt at home in a canoe. I have been taking commercially guided canoeing/kayaking/rafting trips since 1985. Taking into account my age, Chris granted me special dispensation from heavy lifting and other arduous demands. "Relax," he would say. I thought to myself that with a doctor, a masseur and a physical therapist along, I had an excellent odds on chance of surviving the trip.

Being the only American in the party, I did my best to represent the United States. Being a Republican, Democrat, Communist or whatever political or religious stripe one might have embraced meant nothing here. On the contrary, we were all true Yukoners, united to battle the common foe of headwinds, rain, cold or bony shallow stretches of the river, as well as just to have a good time.

On the second day we assembled our

canoes. If our put in access had been by vehicle, we would have used Old Town, Mad River or other American or Canadian fully constructed models. In this situation, however, the only sensible put in was by way of a bush pilot flight and we would be relying on rubber/plastic pac boats. Citing safety considerations, Canadian law prohibits roping or lashing solid completely assembled canoes to planes.

For \$3,000 apiece Chris had assembled a fleet of four rubber and aluminum rod Ally boats of Norwegian manufacture, considered to be the Cadillacs of pac canoes. Not being a mechanical engineer by trade or inclination, I assisted by distributing the various parts to those assembling the canoes. Sometimes the first exposure to this delicate construction fooled the novice to do it yourselves as they placed the wrong rod in the right socket or vice versa. On occasion they had to disassemble a whole section and start over again. Rods popped out with a vengeance. Chris came by and made adjustments. After about two hours of trial and error, the canoes were ready, whereupon we rolled them over on their sides to ward off any potential collection of rainwater.



Only mechanical geniuses need apply! More complex and complicated than assembling a child's Gilbert Erector Set model, one needs skill to master the intricacies of pac canoe construction.

The next morning, in the nippy air, we broke camp. "There's ice all over the bottoms," someone exclaimed as we scraped the film coating off the hulls and carried the boats down to the water's edge for loading.

We were off. Summit Lake itself was worth all the effort to get here, an utterly magnificent pristine watery paradise. We dug our paddles into the choppy water against a slight headwind and aimed west for the outlet somewhere in the distance.

I was overjoyed to be on the same waters with such select company as the early explorers, followed by the Klondike Stampeders and continuing to the present time. In 1971 Verlen Kruger and Clint Waddel passed through on their 7,000 mile saga to the Bering Sea. Then, in 2005, Karsten Heuer and his wife Leanne Allison paddled the identical route. Both parties sought out the caribou, wrote about them in their books and captured them on film, especially noted is Heuer's prizewinning *Being Caribou*. At last I had joined them in spirit in this same quest.

"There are no portages on this trip," Chris had told us in advance. I took him for his word. We crossed the lake in about 45 minutes and searched for the outlet along the high banks. Soon we discovered a modest creek, the birth of the Little Bell River. For the first hundred yards we broke through brush and dead limbs and branches, almost like an obstacle course, to brief stretches of

open water. In the bow, I snapped twigs or ducked under limbs and thought we would eventually crash through this mess. I was totally mistaken. The ordeal became worse.

Chris and I, nevertheless, pressed forward, hindered by downed branches, trunks with flared roots half in the water, combined with an overhead canopy latticework of vegetation. Chris resorted to an axe to whack through this jungle. I was colliding with too many branches, taking hits on the arms and shoulders. Moving ahead in this wretched thicket, even for a few feet, exhausted much time and energy. We were now blocked on both sides and in front.

"Dick, get out," Chris cried, "and I'll help you up the bank." My weight in the bow hindered progress. In the back of us, several other bow paddlers were on the verge of abandoning the struggle. We climbed up the damp slippery slopes, grabbing at bushes along the way. Our expedition was snarled just an hour after we had started.

Once on top, I joined the others for a hike in the general direction of downstream. The route was very indefinite, no trails, thick grass, knolls and little ponds, adding to the confusion. After a 20 minute hike, we saw a break in the vegetation and heard voices below. The sternmen had won the battle against this almost impenetrable barrier. With difficulty I lowered myself down to the canoes. "Time for lunch," Chris shouted.

The river expedition now began in earnest. For the next few days, we lived a canoeist's lifestyle, paddling, gathering wood, setting up camp, eating, sleeping and fishing, a ritual which has gone on for thousands of years ever since the Native Americans paddled these waters. The Little Bell became benign, now free of log barriers, a Class One paddle with occasional riffles and sandbars for a little variety. Our campsites were picked at random on the banks with never a sign of fire pits, stone rings or trash. Wood was plentiful and easily collected, as no one had passed through here in some time.



Just as Jack London's classic short story, "To Build a Fire," relates the necessity for safe wilderness survival skills, our party adopts a "To Pitch a Tent" credo to ensure adequate livability and comfort.

For two days we saw the ragged mountains, a north south spur of the Richardson Range with talus slides gashing the slopes. Mountain goats and Dall sheep lived up there by preference. This countryside was avoided by caribou as they prefer and seek out plains and gentle slopes for easier travel and grass for food. In many ways, this passageway was the highlight of the trip, an idyllic world of solitude, one day blending seamlessly into the next.

Messing About in Boats, November 2015 – 9



There is no need to pinch yourself, it's real. Paddling on a Yukon river on a sunny day, with a blaze of fall foliage is nirvana, paradise found.

We reached the Bell River confluence, a swollen wider stream, with an entrenched passageway and low willows atop the banks with periodic flat shelf plains.

By the fifth day in the late morning, still on the Bell, Chris and I were in the lead canoe, breaking the watery trail for the other three canoes in our wake. The day was glorious with blue sky above and a coolness in the air. It was so peaceful one could have fallen half asleep and still mechanically paddled by pure instinct.

I sensed first, rather than saw, a flash of movement on the right shelf bank. A dull noise drifted back in our direction. "There they are," Chris shouted in the next second. A hundred caribou came into sight, trotting easily downstream and away from us. "Paddle, paddle, paddle," my brain cried, "Paddle with all one's might." My heart beat faster and faster. We must catch up, we must get closer, we must seize this opportunity. I had seen caribou before on my earlier Arctic trips from camp or on hikes, but this utterly unexpected sighting from our canoe on the river surpassed those earlier encounters.

"Paddle, paddle, paddle." We and our paddles became united, zooming ahead, with unanticipated energy. Finally we made up the distance and caught up with the herd. They stood on the bank, their heads turned towards us, quietly looking. That trust lasted only a few seconds. The herd turned abruptly and accelerated from a trot, to a fast trot and finally a gallop. The females led in front, with the stags coming up in the rear. The racks of the stags

served as high wedges as they scampered past the slower animals. The caribou were annoyed and agitated by our presence, perhaps the first humans they had ever encountered.

They soon outran our weaker by comparison paddling. The caribou then turned abruptly and half forded, half swam across the water to river left, a spray showering the air. To my complete surprise, the herd then doubled back to recross the river. "They are afraid," Chris shouted. The caribou were confused and anxious to escape our intrusion. Upon reaching the same shore from which they had originally fled, they again shook themselves vigorously, the spray mist temporarily obscuring their bodies. On the dead run, they vaulted up the loose gravel slope, digging their hoofs into the dirt with a clicking sound. Running for their lives, the caribou herd bounded over the top bank and disappeared into the brush.

One old caribou, the last in the pack, could not grip with traction. He slid down the incline, frantically trying to arrest his fall and then desperately scrambled to regain his footing. With a second effort, he pitched forward and finally bolted into the brush. The herd was gone, the whole incident had taken place in two minutes or less. We never saw a (live) caribou again for the rest of the trip. Once again I love the caribou with their never say die spirit.

Within a couple of days we were paddling in a cold rain shower in the afternoon. "We're going to join the Porcupine," Chris said. I soon saw a broad majestic river, probably a quarter mile wide. There would be no rapids for the rest of the expedition. The Porcupine was born of the confluence of the Bell and the Eagle Rivers. To the east, the Eagle River is easily accessed from a put in at Dempster Highway without the recourse of a bush pilot flight. The Porcupine River continues to flow westward 292 miles to join the mighty Yukon River as a major tributary. As mentioned previously, the Porcupine name is derived from the Gwich'in word, "Ch'oonjik," which translates to "Porcupine Quill River." The caribou herd, in turn, takes its name from the river. We never saw a single porcupine during the entire trip. They must have been hiding. The native Americans, by the way, consider porcupine meat as a highly sought after delicacy in their diet.

Once we landed on the Porcupine River gravel bar and began setting up camp, we noticed a small craft on the Eagle River approaching us downstream. A solo kayaker drew closer. This person paddled a short distance beyond us then angled in for a landing. Just short of the pebbly beach, the kayaker raised and pumped his arms and paddle in triumph.

The man strolled over to greet us. We were anxious to meet him. "I am Phillip and come from Tokyo, Japan," he said in perfect English. "I put in at Eagle River and have been out for a week." He was very friendly with a smile on his face. "I'll take out at Old Crow," Phillip continued. "I am here to see and to photograph the wildlife. This is my eighth expedition to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories."



Satori found! Phillip, the intrepid Japanese solo kayaker, paddles to the Porcupine River gravel bar landing.

Phillip was probably in his late 40s or early 50s, and appeared to be in perfect health, notwithstanding the rigors of a long expedition. I admired him for his stamina and self confidence, a prime athlete, completely relaxed, no fears, no tension, no worries. Seeing the calmness in his face, I had the utmost faith that he would finish his trip safely. I am rather skeptical and leery of solo wilderness trippers, some never come back, but in Phillip's case I made an exception. He was psychologically better equipped for such a wilderness quest than anyone in our party. I imagined that perhaps he had embraced a Zen Buddhist or Bushido code which may have given him his extraordinary courage. In any case, Phillip, I hope to meet you again. To me, you are a hero.

Phillip walked back along the shore and made camp. He was alone with his highly decorated Japanese made kayak, his tent and his food, an existence stripped to the essentials. We saw and waved to him several times from our canoes in the next day. We assumed Phillip eventually completed his expedition by arriving at Old Crow, as we surely would have heard otherwise if any mishap had occurred.

The Porcupine River spread out ahead as a major watery highway as we pushed ahead, helped with the downward flow. The low ridges on either side were wreathed in fall foliage, the yellow aspen blazing in bright color. Every day was magnificent with sunny skies. Only one thing could have posed any

A juggernaut cannot be stopped. A caribou herd runs on to victory as it has for thousands of years.



kind of a threat, “If you see a grizzly,” Chris warned, “don’t land. Stay in the canoe.” Our luck held, we saw no bears.



One late morning we paddled in usual silence. Boom, boom, boom. In the distance downriver we heard three shots. I immediately suspected that a hunter had taken a caribou, or had missed. In a few minutes we approached a motorboat anchored offshore with three men aboard, one white man and two Native Americans. Behind the stern I saw something half floating in the water. “We killed two caribou,” the man casually said. I looked more closely and distinguished two brown furry bodies with a hoop of chains to drag them. Rather than an arduous carry through the woods or along a riverbank, inevitably with detours, the easiest way to convey these kills was by boat, either to a camp downstream, or even back to the village of Old Crow itself.

These men were simply carrying on a hunt, a pursuit which has gone on for thousands of years. In the past, it was with bows, arrows, spears and muscle power carries; nowadays it is with rifles, scopes and motorboats. The bottom line end result has always been the same, meat for food, skins for clothes and bones for implements. Here in the North, the caribou, not bread, is the staff of life for the Gwich’in.

As we began to draw closer to the village of Old Crow, still some miles downstream, we stopped at a few Gwich’in hunting and fishing camps, each with a cabin for lodging, a smoke house to cure and racks for drying, the meat. Chris had befriended a number of individuals who spent time there at the camps during the harvest season. We could always tell which camps were currently occupied, tipped off by the sight of a motorboat pulled up on a gravel landing. Without a boat, we knew no one would be there.

We approached the camp of Georgie Moses, Chris’s friend, on river right. Climbing a zigzag path up the boulder strewn slope brought us to Georgie’s cabin. Georgie, along with his companion Mike, greeted us as if they had expected our party would be paddling by at this time of year. The men were outfitted with rubber boots, wool shirts and pants and baseball caps. Like almost all the individuals I have met who spend long intervals in the bush across the North, these men were slim and physically fit. Such a vigorous outdoor lifestyle ensures a rugged constitution.

“Once I paddled down to Fort Yukon,” Georgie said. He talked about life on the river, the caribou and the hunt. “I am the village carpenter in Old Crow,” Mike said. This area was their home and they did not speak of any other place.

On time and on schedule, we approached the village of Old Crow on river right. We landed at the base of an exceed-

ingly rough trail up a hill. At the top there was a little cabin and campground which would be home for the next few days. “The only tourists who come here to Old Crow,” Chris said, “are the canoeists.”

Within five minutes of our arrival a middle aged Gwich’in man greeted us with a wide smile and constant grin. He shook everyone’s hand. “Welcome to Old Crow,” he said. “My name is Harvey. You are welcome to take hot showers at my home.” He repeated his invitation several times. After we set up camp, most of us followed Harvey to his house for a most welcome treat. Other visitors came by with open hospitality. One older man, Victor, was the son of a Danish trapper and his Gwich’in wife.

Old Crow was civilization after our days on the river. This community of about 250 people is accessible only by air or river, with no roads leading in or out of this isolated place. There is an airport, store, clinic, school, church and a Royal Canadian Mounted Police station. The roads are unpaved. Trucks and ATVs speed by on the streets, splashing in the puddles after rain showers. Virtually every home has a rack of caribou or moose antlers mounted over the doorway. Crows fly and land on the tree branches and tops. Dogs run free without leashes.



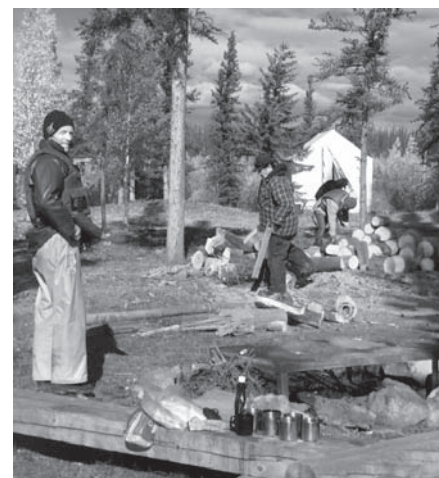
“Dear Lord, thanks to you, we have arrived here safely.” St Luke’s Anglican Church at Old Crow, across from the campground, offers spirituality.

After such a successful and enjoyable expedition, we invariably drifted into half formulated plans about future trips. “I hope next year we can canoe the Thomsen River on Banks Island,” Chris said. “I have paddled there and the muskoxen come right down to the bluff over the water.” The Thomsen, by

the way, is the northernmost navigable river on the continent.

We speculated as well on our hopes of seeing each other again, ideally another paddle in Yukon Territory. Ever the optimist, Corina had no doubts. “I think we will,” she said. “I agree,” I said and could not resist adding a ridiculous comment. “If one of us lived on Mars, the second on Uranus, the third on Jupiter and so forth,” I said, “hopes for another expedition would be dashed as a fantasy. But since we have already met once on the planet Earth, we should have no problem joining up again.” And we will.

The day before we left a tribal elder invited us as his guests to board his motorboat for a ride upriver to visit the Old Crow retreat council center. We accepted. His boat saved the day as a cold headwind lashed the river with waves, rendering any upriver canoe paddle just about impossible. We landed and climbed to a level bench. No one was at the center. Soon we had a fire going in a pit and boiled water for coffee and tea.



A fire for hot coffee at the Old Crow tribal retreat center warms up a chilly, windy day. Undoubtedly, better decisions and policies are planned here than back in town.

Around the firepit, in a wide amphitheater back from the river, a large meeting hall and perhaps a dozen individual tent structures were spaced out for sufficient privacy. I walked over and relished a sense of simple dignity here, just a place of solitude for the Old Crow villagers to relax, think and make decisions.

I glanced inside one of the semi permanent tents on a wooden frame. Inside were just the basic necessities, a bed, a table and a couple of chairs, stripped clean, without ornamentation. Nailed to the wall, a poster proclaimed in large capital letters:

“Long live the porcupine caribou! Do what we can. Harvest wisely, protect critical habitat. Protect Alaska calving grounds.”



These straight to the heart sentiments articulated my affection for caribou. I quickly memorized the message, which advances and promotes their cause, a ringing echo in my mind. Long live the Porcupine caribou!



Paris restaurants and cuisine lag far behind. French five star chef Chris prepares one of his on the river hot lunches. More than scenery and wildlife sightings, paddlers crave nutritious, stick to the ribs meals.



Chores galore. Washing dishes for cleanliness and good health is just as important for a successful expedition as paddling or pitching tents.



Almost every Old Crow residence features a rack of antlers over or near the front door. A hunting society is dependent upon successful annual caribou harvests.

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), English lexicographer, author and wit, was wrong when he said, "A fishing rod is a stick with a hook at one end and a fool at the other." Our fishing team provided most ample catches for many meals on our expedition.



Practical Information

Canada's Richardson Mountains, along with the Little Bell, Bell and Porcupine Rivers, are located among the most remote areas of the North American continent. Indifferent to human life, this land is ill suited for those prone to sickness or accident. In the event of a major catastrophe, the Far North takes very few prisoners.

In the interest of common sense and safety, I strongly recommend the services of professional guides and bush pilots.

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Why not Blue Hill Bay?

Over the years I have canoed around most every major bay along the coast of Maine: Casco, Muscongus, Penobscot, Deer Isle, Mount Desert, and even Cobscook and Passamaquoddy, but I only straight-lined it through Blue Hill Bay, and I never made it around Swans Island. It is possible that as a paddler one always looks for “far-away-great-adventure-venues”, missing what is right under one’s nose. Starting a trip in Ellsworth, barely 30 miles away from my home in Orono, never occurred to me. This place is where I paddle in early winter and spring when all freshwater lakes and rivers in my neck of the woods are already/still frozen over.

The Union River in Ellsworth is tidal, i.e. is brackish, and to boot, has a significant run-off from a power dam, preventing or at least delaying the final freeze-up. Spring also comes early for eager boaters. Ellsworth also has a great put-in ramp with ample parking, the river is pretty and very remote looking, and when you get into Union River Bay after about 2.5 river miles, you can enjoy the significant skyline of Mt. Desert Island and the open vistas of Union River Bay.

So when in the middle of last winter I was thinking about where I might paddle this summer, Ellsworth came to mind as the starting point. It also would be a very short car shuttle for Nancy. I liked that. No more Cape Vincent, Chicoutimi, Tadoussac/Saguenay, Matapedia or Miramichi put-ins or take-outs. Granted, those were great venues with interesting names, but Blue Hill and Swans Island are pretty names also and definitely worthy of a week’s excursion along its outer shores and around its many islands, a great 100-miler.

Three days after this year’s roughest Blackburn Challenge, a 20-mile ocean race around Cape Ann in Gloucester, Massachusetts, I was packed up and ready to go in my trusty Verlen Kruger Sea Wind sea canoe. The weather forecast for the day was typical for late July in Maine (July 28, to be exact): hazy to thick fog. But I have no problem with that, and I was off with a smile, anticipating all the many places I remembered from earlier sailing and canoe trips.



Ready to go.

Blue Hill Harbor and Mountain.



Around Blue Hill Bay and Swans Island

By Paddle Power

By Reinhard Zollitsch
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Into the Fog

When I got out into the bay, visibility was about a quarter of a mile - very peaceful for me. Loons were yodeling in the mist, and now and then I heard the watery, gurgly barking of harbor seals hauled out on some ledge. Where I expected shore, I heard occasional hammering and sawing as well as some human voices and dogs barking. July and August are the two summer months in Maine. Everybody has arrived and is hoping for sunny weather. But the Atlantic has its own ideas.

After going basically south for 11 miles, I rounded Newbury Neck into Blue Hill and Morgan Bay. Burnt Point had a very enticing pocket beach, but the promontory looked very private, and I moved on till I got to Jed Island. I had stopped there in 1996, on my first Maine Island Trail (MITA) paddle from Portland to Machias. But a lot had changed, and the spot I had camped on was declared off limits because of an active eagle’s nest. So I moved over on the seawall, hearing, but never seeing, the eagle. It was low tide, which the many harbor seals on South Ledge enjoyed, me not so much, because it meant a longer portage. Then the sun came out, and it got hot. Time for a swim.

Blue Hill Mountain & Harbor

Day two started sunny and calm. High tide was about 10am. I crossed Morgan Bay, which may in the future raise oysters, I recently read in the papers. Seals were everywhere as I headed straight towards the Blue Hill Mountain, clearly visible at the entrance to East Blue Hill. And smack dab in the middle of the entrance, as in so many Maine harbors, big menacing ledges were lurking below the surface. I always wonder how early explorers fared without NOAA charts, just equipped with a sharp look-out and a lead line. However, that can’t have been enough for a prudent skipper. So I picture them anchored off shore and investigating a bight or possible harbor by rowboat and reporting back to the skipper.

Blue Hill Harbor was the same. First there is the “Kennedy Rock”, so named after a Kennedy boat that once fetched up on it. And then again smack dab in the middle of the harbor entrance is Sculpin Point Ledge, making out from the right. Beware, boaters, the incoming tide is running real hard over it. So you better make sure you leave the red

nun #6 on starboard before rounding up into the inner harbor.

Nancy and I had sailed into this harbor many times with our first two children when they were little, and it was always a tense moment, since I grew up thinking you can sail off your mooring as well as anchor without power. I had grown up in post-war Germany where we simply did not have motors. Even our University’s 60’ steel-hulled ocean racing yawl *Peter von Danzig* did not have a motor, which was very exciting for us young students entering tight little Danish or Swedish harbors. So I also considered our 5-horse British Seagull motor on our 22’ swing-keel sailboat “decoration”. I hardly ever used it.

The sight into Blue Hill Harbor is stunning. The mountain, which really appears blue from a distance, fills the entire view, with the Kollegewidgewok Sailing Club and its fleet hugging the right shore. The left lobe runs dry at low tide and is studied with ledges. My advice: be very careful or avoid it completely. However, this was heaven for our kids in 1975, when we came in here, often in the thick of fog. Our 7-year-old son was allowed to row our little 8’ dinghy anywhere he wanted inside of Sculpin Ledge, sometimes taking his 5-year-old sister along. They each wore a PFD with whistle; I had the tin foghorn, and we had agreed on a communications code.

Nice, happy memories of our young family. But I had to push on, again almost straight south for 7 more miles to the mouth of Allen Cove. Before I got there, though, I suddenly caught sight of the arched bridge over Blue Hill Falls, a short, but vigorous tidal reversing falls. The tide this morning was running in hard, just as it did in 1973 (and every 12 hours since then, of course). We had been invited for a family picnic and swim off the rocks by a faculty friend of ours. He was an avid canoeist, but without a partner to run the big tidal waves of the falls. So he asked me to be his bow man and LEAN downstream on my paddle as we entered the fast current from behind the bridge embankment.



Blue Hill Falls.

That was a good one. I had never been in a canoe before, but was willing to try my luck. I watched a few other canoes shoot the rapids, visualized the process, and pushed off with conviction. Voila! I hung out on my paddle, we shot into the haystacks and bounded

through them with joyful shouts. This was real fun. We did it many more times, till the tide eventually fell slack at high tide. And when there was no boat in the way, some older kids and even Nancy would jump into the maelstrom from the bridge, clutching their life jackets as they splashed into the waves. A safety boat would make sure everybody made it back to shore OK.

Yes, this day was the beginning of my canoeing career. I joined the local canoe club, the Penobscot Paddle and Chowder Society, and built my first canoe off the club mold the following spring (1974). Nancy and I both have many very fond memories of family canoe camping trips in that boat.

With a smile, I tore myself loose from that place and headed further down the bay towards Allen Cove, inside of Herriman Point. Unfortunately there was no MITA overnight spot in the area, but I found a lovely, shaded pebble beach, which should do just fine. I lucked out. The owners came by, walking their dogs, after I was all set up with my minimal tent and neat gear. I identified myself, gave them my card, and they let me stay. I always wonder whether any of them ever took the time to look at my articles on my website. Ah well.



Sunrise at Allen Cove.

More Thick Fog

Day three was relatively short, but around three points, and the fog was “legendary”. I crossed over to and rounded Herriman Point, then Flye and finally Naskeag Point. At Flye Point I noticed that there was enough water on the bar to paddle across it into Herrick Bay, saving me going around ledge-studded Flye and Green Islands, a nasty stretch, especially in this fog. And my, was the fog thick! I had hardly ever had so little “visibl”, as weather stations like to call it. My Ritchie compass, though, was accurate, so was my navigation, and I finally made it to Naskeag Point, Naskeag Harbor as well as to Naskeag Island. Moments later the tiny MITA island Little Hog appeared out of the fog, which triggered a loud “YES!” on my part.

Little Hog, a tiny wooded island with a one-tent-only campsite, was another of my all-time Maine favorites. I had camped here in 1996 and remember enjoying a feast of blue mussels. I looked at low tide, but found none. However, the large anthill in front of the

campsite was still there. Swimming was great, though. A black-hulled schooner anchored for the night this side of Babson Island, barely visible. I hope their evening fare was good to make up for the bad visibility.



Foggy arrival on Little Hog Island.



MITA island site.

The Big Jump

Day four was going to be a significant day: crossing over from Naskeag Point to the SW corner of Swans Island, a 6-mile

open water crossing. The weather report was great: clear sky, light winds from the SW and the flood tide coming in. I could see my target as soon as I cleared Naskeag Island. It was a long 6-mile, 2-hour haul across a big open bay, Jericho Bay, against a rather strong tide, which added an extra half hour to the expected 1.5 hours. After the foggy day yesterday, the bay was full of lobster boats, dancing across the bay from buoy to buoy, picking up only their specific color and number. They would put the boat in a starboard spin, pick up the buoy with a boat hook, winch up the lobster pot (trap), take out the lobsters, keep the proper sized ones, throw back the others, tie in a fresh bait bag, toss the trap back into the water, and rush off to the next buoy of theirs. All day, every day, always the same efficient routine; only the weather changes, making it easier or harder to earn a living off the sea.

Some areas have so many lobster traps in the water that I feel the whole thing is like a “lobster nursery”. The young lobsters get fed good fish bait and have nothing to worry about. They get thrown back into the water to grow up, till their carapace (body shell) reaches a certain size. Then the fun is over. They become keepers and end up on some tourist’s dinner plate. Those few lucky ones, who make it to a certain larger size, are also thrown back into the water like the short lobsters (or “shot” lobsters, as coastal Mainers would say), but this time as breeders. So now you know all about the life of a Maine lobster. (In Canada, lobsters are caught following a completely different set of rules.)

I had lots of energy this morning. Good weather helps. I made it fine past Smutty Nose and Mahoney Island into the open bay. Two porpoises greeted me as I finally approached West Point from whence I hopped over to Irish Point and Hockamock Head eventually. It has a prominent lighthouse on it, guiding boats into Burnt Coat Harbor/Minturn, Swans Island’s major harbor. I knew I had made it. I was delighted. The rest was a piece of cake: just paddle all the way up the long narrow harbor arm to the MITA site at City Point.

However, I had a hard time finding this place in the woods and shore brambles. It definitely needs a sign at the water’s edge. The promised green tent platform was also



Hockamock Head Light, Swans Island.

Burnt Coat Harbor, Swans Island,



nowhere to be found, the ground was very uneven and wet, and the whole site was under big, ancient trees, about to drop heavy dead branches. The tidal mudflats surrounding the take-out/put-in place were also much more extensive than indicated.

I found out the hard way next morning. It looked as if I was going to be stranded here for at least 2-3 hours. I did not like “the situation” at all. I had to get out of there sooner, since I had a significant paddle planned for the day, namely rounding Swans Island along its bold eastern shore to North Point and from there jump across to Black and Pond Island eventually. So I devised a doable portage plan. Most of the mud flats were deep, soft, bluish-black, sandal-eating muck. Yuck!

But maybe I could portage a bit further down the shore along a thin, seaweed-covered rocky cleft. I slid my boat down to the water’s edge, followed by strategical armloads of my gear, which I stowed right into my boat. With my last load, my boat began to lift off the mud with the incoming tide. I pushed some more and got in, leaving my nasty looking sandaled feet, caked in oozing mud, dangling outside my boat, to wash them off once I got to deeper, cleaner water. This place goes down in my book as a no repeat.

But my trip picked up again nicely when I got to Harbor Island. The sun came out, and there even was a chemical toilet on the lobster pier, which I took advantage of. This beats carrying out your waste, which is MITA policy, let me remind you. More and more little harbors or lobster coops have those little blue “comfort stations”. So, my boater friends, look for them and keep our island world clean and fresh smelling. Thanks!

Around Swans Island

At the narrows between Harbor Island and Stanley Point the shore turns very bold, interspersed with steep seawalls of rounded granite rocks. I saw only very few houses on shore, but on my right was a wide open stretch of ocean reaching towards Long Island and the two Sister Islands eventually. This is a very formidable shore, which could be downright intimidating in any bad weather. The tide was also coming in hard, creating rips off Red Point, and even bigger rips further offshore, my chart indicated. I moved along with urgency till I rounded East Point. Then suddenly the hard, steep rocky shore turned more into a gravelly, drumlin-type of ocean edge, and lots of houses crowded down to the shore, all the way up to North Point.

And as I was rounding that point, cutting inside of a huge rocky ledge, most likely the former tip of this point, I saw a couple waving their arms frantically in the air and shouting something in my direction. I headed a tad towards shore to hear what they were saying, and when I saw their poodle, I knew it was a colleague of mine from up the street in Orono, vacationing here for a week. We were both surprised to see each other. We talked, I was offered coffee, but I was eager to head across Casco Passage to Black Island and Pond Island eventually.

It was suddenly a very busy scene on the water. The ferryboat was leaving Swans Island for Bass Harbor on Mount Desert Island (MDI), several cruising power and sailboats were traversing from Blue Hill to Jericho Bay via the Casco Passage, and there was a significant sailboat race for wooden boats going on in Mackerel Cove. The wind was also picking up, as it does most every morning around 10.



Low Tide at City Point, Swans Island.

I was glad to fetch Black Island and from there scoot up along the western shore of Sheep to Pond Island. But since I did not like the exposure of the MITA site on the southern point, I went on to the SE indent of the island, another boaters’ overnight spot. It was high tide by now, and the take-out was easy. Swimming was also great, and since nobody else was here or dropped in later, this was a nice stop with great, open vistas towards the mountains of MDI.

Crossing Blue Hill Bay to MDI

I had a peaceful, quiet and calm night, only “interrupted” by the gurgling howling of a group of gray seals on the ledges off Eagle Island. They are so much bigger than our usual Maine harbor seals, and sound completely different: harbor seals have not only a watery bark like a dog, but also a nose ridge like canines, while gray seals howl more like coyotes in a continuous joyful chorus. Some people call them sea wolves for this reason. They have a much bigger, torpedo shaped head, and can weigh up to 750lbs. They are big bruisers, and might fake you out with a splashy warning with their front flippers, if you get too close. And yes, harbor seals submerge back into the water like a dolphin, whereas gray seals mostly go back-in tail first, assisted with a big swish of their powerful front flippers.

Since the weather looked good, I set my course from Pond Island towards the NNE, all the way across Blue Hill Bay to Moose Island, off MDI, a good 5-mile open water crossing. At about the halfway point I came close to the SE corner of Bar Island, always enjoying the great mountain ridge of MDI, getting closer with every stroke. A huge thundercloud hung over the bay for the longest time, ever so slowly drifting to the east, but staying nicely ahead of me. Long wispy streamers told me it was dumping lots of rain onto the island.

Then the sun came out, the shore got closer, and two porpoises greeted me near Moose Island, the same way they had welcomed me to Swans Island. I stopped paddling for a while and watched their elegant dives. I could even hear their breathing, a quick loud exhale followed by a quieter, slower inhale. It was also time for a water and granola break. At that very moment I felt perfectly at peace with the world.

Soon thereafter I became aware of the fact that it was Sunday. All MDI outfitters seemed to hit the ramp at Bartlett Narrows, so it looked, fitting eager tourists mostly into five or more very conspicuous red double kayaks. It looked more like a hasty production number. The boats then drifted south, most of them looking like spastic spiders. They briefly dipped into Pretty Marsh Harbor, rounded tiny Folly and John Islands, only to return for the next group of paddlers, eager to enjoy the beauty and solitude of the Maine coast... Next! A blue comfort station was also provided there, for the many boaters.

Last Night on the Trail at “The Hub”

North of Bartlett Island is a most charming little hub or nubble island, properly named “The Hub”. It is a solid chunk of steep-sided granite with sparse vegetation. The only shaded one-tent site is right in the middle of the island under a very old ant-ridden pine tree. This has not changed since I first camped here in 1996. No big deal; just keep your tent zipped! Landing on this big rock can be hard, though. MITA suggests the western shore at high tide.



The Hub and MDI mountains.

OK, but there is no way to get back to the water at low tide from there, unless you toss your boat over the edge, the way the Old Town Canoe Company did in their ad for their first Royalex boat. (They tossed it off their 3-story factory building to prove its indestructability. Folks, please do not try that at home with a fiberglass, kevlar or carbon fiber boat!) I always land and launch at the northern tip. It is a delight at high tide. There even is a patch of tall grasses above the tide line for the boat to rest on. Launching at low

tide gets a bit more taxing, but is doable. If you have a paddling partner, it is a cinch.

I enjoyed my last afternoon and night “on the rock” immensely. I wished I had packed my cocoa, though (readers of my previous articles know how much I like that in the afternoon :-)) and my 12-grain bread suddenly tasted and smelled very beery (i.e. fermented) – not so good. But other than that, I had packed everything, even enough reading material, and did not miss a thing. A very successful trip so far, only one more day tomorrow, back to my starting point in Ellsworth.

My SPOT locator beacon, which I press whenever I land, also worked flawlessly, even though it reacts a tad too slow for me (or am I too impatient? Nah!). My satellite phone (which I purchased in 2001, as an already older and reconditioned model), on the other hand, still worked like new. However, I have to put up with some of my paddling and sailing friends facetiously calling it “Reinhard’s shoe phone” (“Get Smart”, folks!). It is Nancy’s delight each afternoon at 5pm sharp, when I make my brief safety check-in call with her (and I like it too.)

Before turning in for the night, I listen one more time to the NOAA weather report on my VHF radio. A front was approaching. There would be more wind during the night, but even more during the day tomorrow: 10-20 knots with gusts to 30, from the SSW, almost from behind for my course tomorrow. But it was only 1.3 miles across from my island perch to the next tip of land, Oak Point, on Union River Bay. I’ll do fine, I mused, as I finally fell asleep.

Low Tide and a Fresh Breeze

I watched a beautiful sunrise through my tent door, just as I was getting up at 6, as usual. The wind had already freshened. The Hub looked like a tall ship at dead low tide. Oh my, this will be a hard take-off!

But I enjoyed my usual breakfast of pre-mixed-at-home “müsli” and coffee, packed up and started carrying my packs to my boat, the usual three runs for all gear. Then I had to figure out a way for my boat to get to the water, which required some careful carries over the sharp rocks, some sliding on seaweed beds and more portaging. I was then very eager to get going. The wind was already at 15 knots, almost straight from the south, and whitecaps were forming. It looked like an exciting last day on the water. I was looking forward to the challenge.



Low tide take-off from The Hub.

My 1.3-mile open water crossing went great. Wind and waves were nicely carrying me to my goal. The force was definitely with me. It was nice, though, to have a foot-operated rudder, since I only use a single-bladed canoe paddle, unlike all kayakers. Not too long after I reached shore, the wind increased to 20 knots. I loved it and swiftly made it to the mouth of the Union River and up to Ellsworth eventually.

At 11am sharp I landed halfway up the boat ramp, since the tide had come in with me. Nancy was there to greet me. What a cheer-

ful sight. Thanks dear! After a quick hug and a kiss, I started transferring my packs to our little VW Golf, washed my boat and swung it onto my head in order to transfer it to the roof rack. Done! Nancy had promised me a crabmeat roll from the harbor food stand, but “Sorry, we are closed on Mondays”. So it was plan B: stop at the fish man in town, and their crabmeat roll was just as good as the one I had tasted weeks earlier at the harbor stand.

So ended my one-week (seven days on the water with six overnights), 100-mile solo canoe trip around Blue Hill Bay and Swans Island. And what a great and stunningly beautiful trip it turned into again. I can recommend it. And it again seemed as if I had the entire ocean to myself. I never had to share an overnight spot with other boaters. But please be prudent with the longer open-water crossings! Blue Hill Bay can get very rough indeed. It is wide open to the usual strong southwest winds of summer, and remember, the water never really warms up for comfortable unintentional “swimming”, especially in the wave-slop, holding on to boat, paddle and gear.

The only time this ever happened to me was in this year’s brutal 20-mile Blackburn ocean race around Cape Ann, in Gloucester, Massachusetts. No fun, folks! But don’t worry: I scrambled right back onto my solo outrigger canoe and completed the race in good standing. All’s well, that ends well! I like that.

Happy paddling! Be safe and enjoy!

Boat: 17’2” Verlen Kruger Sea Wind sea canoe.

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It was early August and we still had not had an opportunity to use our big tripping canoe in a serious way. Occasional mornings on local lakes were fun, but we were trying to plan a canoeing vacation trip before the summer got away from us. In the spring we had visited my son and daughter-in-law in Olympia, Washington, but there had been no canoeing on that trip, and the canoe did not go with us in June to the cottage on Owl's Head, Maine. It was not as if we had not been away, but we were not just looking for more time away. There was something missing and we needed the canoe to help us find it.

About two months earlier I had written to Blue Mountain Lodge in Killarney Park, Canada, asking if they had any availability but we had not heard from them. Blue Mountain Lodge is the only lodge within the park, having been established before it was a park. In earlier years as we passed the access road I thought about staying there when we got old. It would be a lot easier than canoe camping and still within the beautiful park we had often been to. We were old enough now but it was apparent we would have to come up with something else.

We had often been canoe camping at Forked Lake in the Adirondacks and had driven through there on our way to Maine this year. We were looking for something different, but it was a good place so we decided to call and try to reserve a campsite. As I was looking up the number for Forked Lake reservations the phone rang. "This is Victoria at Blue Mountain Lodge," said the voice. I was astounded. It had taken my letter most of the two months to get to them because of the way I had addressed it. Yes, they did have space due to a cancellation and it even happened to be the week we were hoping for. I hesitated. "Would you like me to tell you about it?" she asked.

Blue Mountain Lodge is an old time fishing camp on Bell Lake. There is a large lodge building on an island with several cottages surrounding it and a few more on the mainland, all with cooking facilities (propane), no electricity and no phones. There is a Finnish sauna, boats and canoes for rent and a hiking trail to the top of Blue Mountain. Then on its own one acre island not far from the lodge is Shuska cottage, the one she was describing, a very small one room cabin just big enough for two people. It had a screened porch, a picnic table just outside on the shore and a solar heated outdoor shower. The cabin was located just a few feet from the water's edge with a great view of the lake. It sounded wonderful and we immediately signed up.

We turned onto the Bell Lake Road from Route 637, the road to Killarney village, after

On a Quiet Island of Our Own

By Hugh Groth

driving all day. It was a dirt road, rutty and rough, much as Route 637 had been when we first came to Killarney Park, and the terrain was swampy, rocky and scrubby most of the way to the canoe launch. But once there we found a clear lake, clean and beautiful, with Blue Mountain Lodge directly across. I signaled the owner and he came over with his outboard to ferry us to our island, towing our canoe. Because the lodge had been there so long, he was allowed outboard motors for the business, the only motors permitted on the lake. He helped pull our canoe up on the dock and gave us a tour of our home for the week.

The cabin had a bed, a propane lamp on the wall, a composting toilet in a small back corner room and a kitchen in the other corner. This included a propane stove, a gas refrigerator and a sink with running water, gravity powered from a cistern on the mountain. We could lie in bed, open the hinged windows to the screened porch and hear the calling loons. There was a coil of black plastic tubing on a platform in front of the cabin to which the water line was attached so that on a sunny day there was warm water by afternoon sufficient for a short shower. The shower enclosure was behind the cabin. It was all very efficient, very compact and very homey, just a step above camping.

There is not much to do on a small island, but then there is not much to do on a remote campsite either except that the campsite requires maintenance, where the cabin did not. I could read, paint, play my harmonica or I could enjoy the solitude and write.

Quiet is what we had here. When sitting on the porch swing or drifting in the canoe on Bell Lake there is quiet. It calms us and is one of the things that bring us back to Killarney. Sigurd Olson, the great naturalist and northern guide, writes about the "Great Silences" as something seldom found, something that only occurs in the North Country. He means the same thing but I think of silence as lack of sound. Our quiet is often filled with sound, bugs, loons, wind, lapping waves and the quiet includes a calm, a peace, a lack of disturbance, joy and renewal. We search out the quiet and so come to the North Country.

I found a place for my hammock between two trees, nicely located next to the cabin with a good view of the lake, although getting in and out was a bit tricky because there was a large anthill right under it. I had to

have my book or supplies well in hand before I got in and did not set them on the ground. Mary Anne read or just sat and soaked up the view, something she has taught me to do.

The dock was on the east side of the island, generally out of the wind so it was easy to board the canoe for a ride or to go to the mainland. The configuration of the lake put the island out of the prevailing winds anyway so we went out in the canoe often. A family of otters lived in a little bay on the other side of the lake near the canoe launch. We frequently paddled over to the bay and three or four of the curious little animals would pop their heads up and swim around each other in a circle while they watched us. It brought to mind the book, *Ring of Bright Water*, because the small family made their little ring of water sparkle. Ring was the otter's name in the book, but no matter, we were happy to see it this way. Then in the evening we paddled around the point of land to the west of the island to watch the sunset. Good weather and clear days made this possible most evenings and we could sit in the canoe, listen to the loons and watch the glowing sun go down behind the darkening mountains with the sky streaked red, and orange.

At Bell Lake in Killarney we are on an island of our own, surrounded by clear water and wilderness. Gliding silently in the big white canoe at dusk I feel at home. With the canoe under me and a good ash paddle in my hands I am whole again and the years fall away once more.

I sometimes noticed other guests coming out of the sauna near the lodge and leaping into the cold water, but I did not use it. Instead, when the weather was warm enough I took a cold but exhilarating swim in the lake in front of the cabin. It would have required paddling over to the mainland to get to the sauna and I guess I was reluctant to interrupt the solitude and isolation of the little island. We did paddle over and hike the path up to the rocky top of Blue Mountain one day. From the wide clear top of the mountain we had a fine view of the other nearby mountains and the lake and could sit and watch canoes heading out and returning to the launch point. Bell Lake is large and long and serves as an access point to other lakes deep in the interior because the portages are manageable, and it is the start of one of the main routes to the very large David Lake and Three Narrows Lake in the far north of the park.

Another time we paddled to the launch point and drove to a trail where we could reach a vantage point to view a wide expanse of Georgian Bay with its myriad islands, some tree covered, but most just rocks. It was a beautiful sight and a good walk.

The week ended too soon without our ever taking the canoe out on Killarney Lake on this trip, and we missed it, so as soon as we could we made reservations for the next year, about the same time, but this time we also reserved a site in the Killarney Park campground for two days before we were to go to the cabin. Almost no site in a campground is ideal, and the one we had reserved was no more than a place to pitch a tent, but it was close to an easy canoe launch point, one I could easily carry the canoe to from the campsite. With a short time before we were to go to Bell Lake we limited our canoeing to George Lake, no portaging to the interior, but it was enough to make us feel as if we had at least some of what we had missed the year before.

Once again on the island with our little cabin we found that it was almost too familiar, no longer new and exciting, with little apparently left to discover. Still, it was nice and we were able to renew the pleasures from the previous year, eventually finding things were not all the same. The otters were gone but the loons were still there, and the sunsets and the night sky.

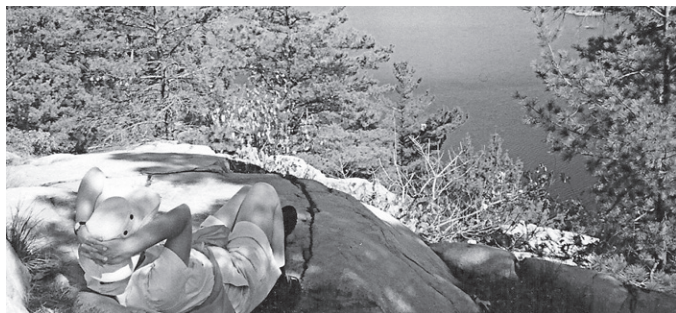
We had traveled about 550 miles from home. On the previous week we camped for two nights in the rain within the source of one of our joys, the mountains, rocks and lakes of Killarney Park. Now we were once again in a small cabin, but Monday evening we stayed out in the canoe nearly till dark to watch the sunset. The next night we stayed up late to see the far north intensity of the stars. It would have been more comfortable in the cabin, or warm in our bed, but to me the willingness, the need to do such things represents the real excitement of life. It is the difference between life as it should be and an existence which seeks only comfort. Little things they are, but it is little things that always make a difference.

We lay on our backs on the picnic benches in the cold air for over an hour. There were so many stars to be seen there that we could not have picked out constellations, even those that we know, and the Milky Way was a bright white ribbon across the sky. The weather was not bright and clear all week, but even that was not unwelcome, for we could sit on the porch and gain new

insights and appreciation for our surroundings in the North Country. We walked up the mountain again, but the rest of the time we stayed put on the island except for an occasional canoe ride.

We watched from the porch afternoons as canoes fought their way against the wind and waves as they were paddled up the lake. Many came at the worst time, just about an hour or so before the wind began to die. Now it is quiet and dead calm. There is a slight mist, an off and on drizzle, but how easy the paddling would be now. If they had only known. Probably there were schedules to keep and impatience must be accommodated. If only we could know how to work with the wilderness and be part of it, especially when we are out in it.

Here on Bell Lake the quiet has returned and we are attuned to it. As evening approaches the day gives way to a slight breeze and now there is only the music of the rain. We look for the quiet, long for it to come and then it finds us in its own way and in its own time.



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There's always "something else I/we gotta do." Always. And while this particular day was no exception, somehow Sam and I threw caution to the wind and did something that's been on my short list for years and years. We ran the entire perimeter of Priest Lake.

Not only that, we wound our way on up the painfully beautiful thoroughfare that connects Priest with Upper Priest Lake. And not only that, we toured the upper lake as well. Somehow my every attempt to do this has met with incompleteness until this day. And not only that, we were the ONLY boat on the upper lake as we made a lazy arc around the northern terminus and, with mixed feelings, started back to the beginning point. The only other time I've been there was over a half century ago, just about the time Nixon was debating that flamboyant guy from Massachusetts on TV. It's been a long, long time.

There was frost still defying the early morning sun as I poured about 20 gallons of high test gas into little *Mobius*, my new to me 1973 Fiberform tri hull. This was Friday of Labor Day weekend 2015, supposed to still be summer. Not so much. I put the canvas top up, closed up the passage to the open bow cockpit and we both wore long pants and jackets. I doubt the temps got above the 50s yesterday.



Summer's gone? Nobody around.

No matter, it was a delightful outing. On the 30 odd mile drive up to the lake we talked about current world events, the wild-fires and relevant personal reflections. On our way home we discussed at great length the vagaries of constructing a crystal set radio receiver, basic amplifiers and even an extended dialogue about rectified current. In between we managed to run that gas tank nearly dry. And for most of the day we had that large lake just about to ourselves. The underway topic centered on prehistoric Lake Missoula, beaching of ice dams and monumental floods. Obviously, a boys only outing.

Passing through the narrows to the upper lake.



The Last Day of Summer?

By Dan Rogers

Did I mention this was Labor Day weekend, normally a very busy denouement to summer stuff. As it turns out, the highway up to the lake had been under several evacuation orders the previous couple of weeks. There was a very much still active forest fire of almost 30,000 acres belching smoke, ash and disaster from the mountain range just a few miles to the west. And maybe, just maybe, everybody else had "something else" they hadda do. And that's really too bad for them.

It rained all day Saturday with the temp stalled at about 52°. When it wasn't raining, it was gray and drizzly. But Sunday was just plain fantastic!



This Google Earth overview shows a stretch of water about 25 miles as the crow swims north to south. I think our total on the water mileage was around 65 miles.

We were out for around three or four hours. Certainly we would have seen more by paddling kayaks. We would have required a couple of days to go that far in a sailboat. But every time I've towed *Lady Bug* up there to do just this sort of voyage, things just haven't worked out.

Every now and then it's alright to take a stinkpot. Hey, we covered about 80 miles by car, another 65 by water and we were home by 1500, give or take. One of these days I may just get to do it with a slow blow boat. That would be nice. But for this weekend this day's motorboat "three hour tour" was fantastic. I'm real glad we did it.



We met these folks part way up the thoroughfare that connects the lakes. My first encounter with inflatable Hobie kayaks powered by the incredibly capable Mirage Drive apparatus.



The bones of the lakes lumber vessel *Tyee*. I, in fact, climbed on this wreck 50 years ago when she had only been grounded there for about two decades. Somehow she still resists the ravages of weather and especially ice.

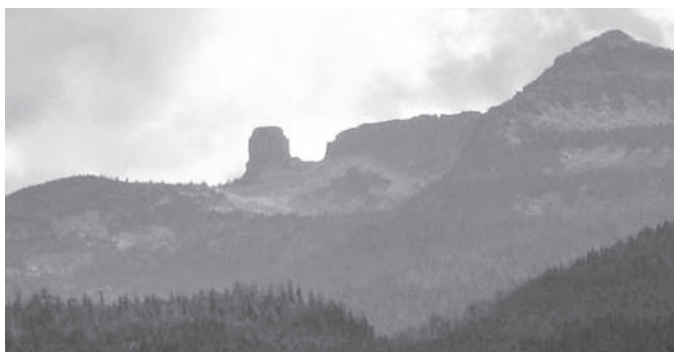




This is Sam's view of the northern lake in the Priest Lake chain.



This is what the camera saw. Both quite special, huh?



Iconic Chimney Rock keeps silent sentinel over Priest Lake. One summer night, long long ago, I watched a full moon rise with this obelisk perfectly silhouetted. Not likely to happen again, for me.



Makin' tracks!



"This is your captain speaking, thanks for joining us today." And yes, that is a Dave Lucas Tiki Hut ball cap about ten miles from Canada, in Almost Canada, of course.

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Kathy is a life long sailor from racers to schooners. She was a good sport to accompany me on a nickel/dime adventure on the Slocum River.



After a three day spring rain, I went up the Sudbury River trying to reach the headwaters that Editor Bob told me about. I got as far as this obstacle and, while the kayaks were squirting through it, I decided I had some work to do back at the office. The Sudbury River is remarkably unspoiled upriver.

A Few Summer Vignettes

By Randall Brubaker



Launching off the stony beach on Morrissey Boulevard this time using a shallow "ramp" tweaked my back when trying to wrestle the loaded boat off the trailer. I may have to narrow my choices of where I play Ninja Trailer Sailor.



Recently sailed from Bristol, Rhode Island, over to Prudence Island. It was gusting 15 in the open water. Working to windward, I had to man the bilge sponge as it got a little splashy. This is about as epic as I'm going to get in 12' boat.



Safely back at the Bristol Town Ramp, now quiet at sunset. It's a nice dock and deep ramp for launching, but the onshore wind was angling into the left side of the dock. So, leading with a bowline, I had to dodge other boats and tourists while I kicked the boat around the dock to the right side where I spent another 20 minutes trying to get the gaff to set with the wind over the port loading the sail. It took me two hours from arriving to sailing away, which is just sick. However, I did entertain (or distress) people at this popular waterfront spot with my boating pursuit.

Busy Sunday on Salem Sound



Harvey Petersiel Photo

On the Trail of Lewis & Clark

25 Years Ago
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Journal
Upper Missouri River Canoe Trip
Matthews-Wetherell Party
June 1989

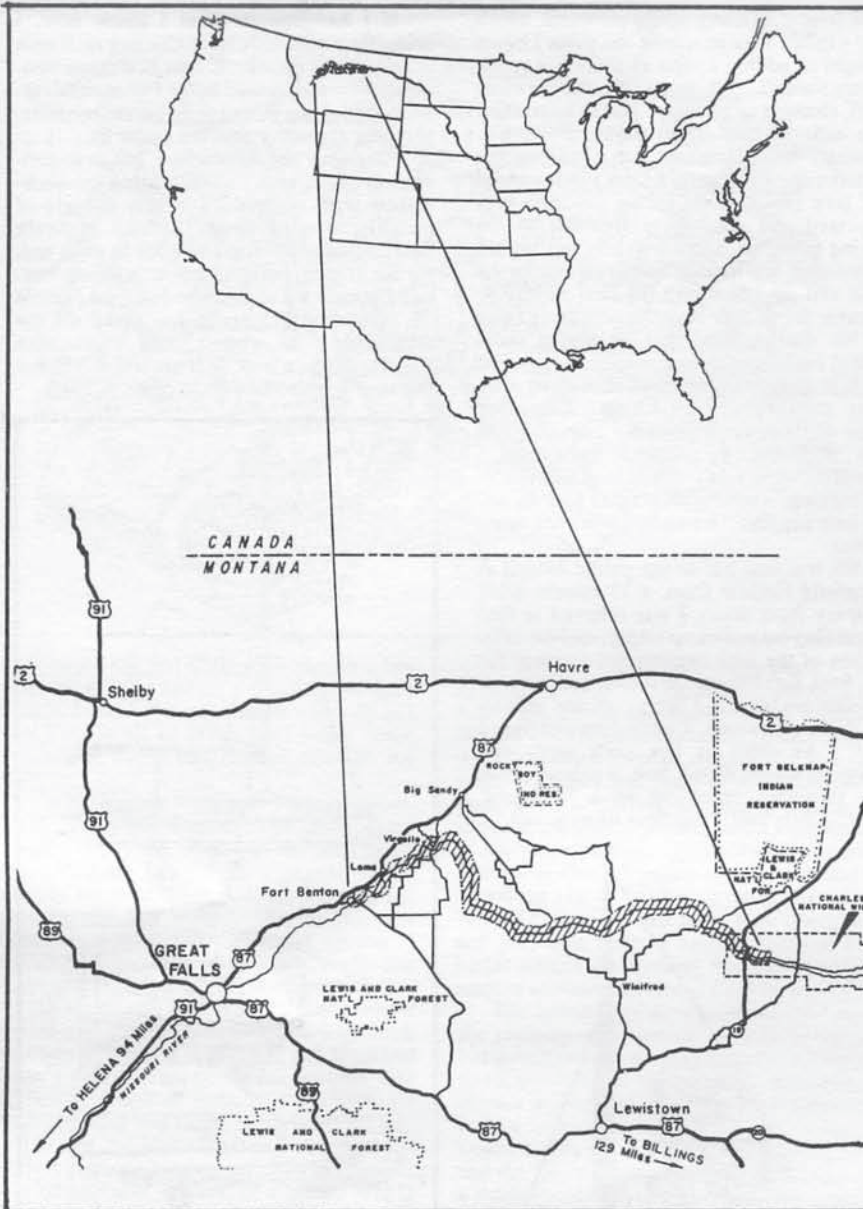
Introduction

The party members of the Matthews-Wetherell Upper Missouri River Trip took turns writing a journal of their observations, just as Lewis and Clark did on their historic trip on the same stretch of river in June of 1805. Our party consisted of 3 adults, 4 teenagers and 3 children, teamed for most of the trip as follows (Stern - Bow):

Zella Matthews	Kelly Wulfekuhle
C.S. Wetherell	Brian Wetherell
Roger Matthews	Matthew Matthews
Val Hayes	Angie Wulfekuhle
Genie Hayes	April Rhoades

The combinations of adult-child and teenager-teenager proved durable and flexible and enabled us to cope with the hardships and enjoy the good times on our adventurous and memorable trip down the historic Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River. Stan Wetherell's canoe-rowing rig was interesting and worked surprisingly well on the Missouri River.

The Journal is presented as written by various members during the trip, including spelling and phrasing.



The Trip Begins

First Day, Saturday, June 24, 1989. Canoeed 8.0 Miles this day
Reached Camp 1, "ISLAND CAMP", Mile 8.0

Great Falls, Montana. I woke this morning with butterflies - a familiar feeling. I have awakened with them aplenty all of the last 30 days anticipating this day. Today we get on the water. We woke up a little later than we planned. Stan and Roger worked late into the night to get the rowing rig in the Grumman Canoe Stan bought. We are breaking camp in the KOA at Great Falls, and getting ready to drive to Fort Benton and our put-in. (ZM)

Right now its 9:52 Montana time. We are running pretty late and we will get to our starting point in the middle of a parade. This is my first experience going down a river in a canoe. So far, even though we haven't gotten on the river it is lots of fun. It's going to be hard but at the same time fun as long as we all get along. We are just about ready to leave, we got everything packed. So we are leaving approx 10:15, from the KOA campsite in Great Falls. (AR)

Ft Benton, a river town with one main street along the Missouri River, was celebrating with a frontier parade right in front of our launch point, with cowboys, Indians, covered wagons, Mounties, and bands (including a bagpipe band to Stan's delight). What a send-off for a canoe trip down the historic Lewis and Clark route on the Upper Missouri. They were even firing cannon balls into the river! (RM)

We eventually put in and pushed off down-river, avoiding a last cannon ball fired after we left. Genie and April were startled and nearly upset by a beaver that bumped under their canoe shortly after takeoff. (RM)

We camped on a small island, just opposite Lewis and Clark's historic camp of June 12, 1805. Nice camp with a gravel bar nicely suited to bathing. We adjusted quickly to the camp and things looked promising for the trip. Mom and I had to get up at 2:00 am and quickly lash all the canoes down, as a big wind came up. (RM)

Right now we are at our "first found" camp site. We've gone about, well between 8 and 10 miles. It has been fun but hard. We are making dinner, its 8:45. We are

having spaghetti and cinnamon rolls for dessert. We are at a pretty good campsite. It has nice scenery, but we could have a possible rain. We've had signs of deer but we have no trouble with the animals, not even bugs!! (AR)

Zella, April and Matt fixed an excellent spaghetti dinner. Zella commented that 3 lbs of spaghetti was TOO much! (RM)
Second Day, Sunday, June 25, 1989.
Canoeed 11.3 miles this day
Reached Camp 2, "BLACK BLUFF RAPIDS CAMP", Mile 19.3

This will probably be our worst day--rain off and on--wind constant. Saw lots of river elk (cows) and farmland. Went under first ferry (LOMA), without incident. Wind was so strong that we pulled over to right side for lunch and were stuck there for two hours. Zella Matthews and Matt Matthews nearly stepped on a huge timber rattlesnake. We were so composed, however, that we set up lunch within 20 feet of the rotten log it hid under. (RM)

We took off again, encouraged by 4 canoes that we saw going by. (We didn't realize at the time that the lead canoe had a motor

and was towing the others.) We tried, but the wind was so strong that we were afraid to try Black Bluff rapids (our first rapids), so we pulled over to set up camp about 5 pm about 1/2 mile from our lunch stop. We didn't realize that WE WERE ON Black Bluff Rapids! We had to walk too far, but otherwise it was a good camp. Stan, Val and Brian fixed excellent dinner of beef stroganoff and cherry cheese cake. (RM)

Third Day, Monday, June 26, 1989, Canoeed 27.5 miles this day

Reached Camp 3, "LITTLE SANDY CREEK CAMP", Mile 46.8

Broke camp [at Black Bluff Rapids], took us 3-1/2 hours to get underway. Things went OK at first but soon wind and rain hit us. Was absolutely miserable day. We stopped for an hour for a rainy lunch--built a fire. Continued on in light rain, which continuously got worse. [One canoe saw an unidentified snake swimming in the river.] Passed lots of river elk, passed Virgile Ferry. (RM)

Coal Banks--after the ferry we went thru a long stretch of pasture land, and finally came to Coal Banks Landing. Talked to the lady River Ranger and picked up some tips, such as the best next camp was Little Sandy. Got fresh water from pump and were on our way. (RM)

Lightning struck nearby, frighteningly close. We got off the water quickly, but after a few minutes we decided to sprint to our next campsite, which was Little Sandy Creek. It was a nice campsite, but the creek we pulled the canoes into was full of mud. [Val was walking in mud down in Little Sandy Creek while unloading the canoes and cut her foot on a stick. Roger pulled out First Aid kit and washed and bandaged the cut.] Roger, Genie and Kelley fixed Chili Beans and Cookies and everyone bombed off to bed, after a nice walk to the top of a hill next to camp. [We did not realize it at the time, but there were a lot of ancient Indian tipi rings in the vicinity.] (RM)

Fourth Day, Tuesday, June 27, 1989, Canoeed 18.3 miles this day

Reached Camp 4, "LOST SHOVEL CAMP", Mile 65.1

We decided to sleep in until 6 am, and take it easy. We were on the river by 9:45 am, slowed by an emergency with April. She was helping strike a tent when a sliver of fiberglass from the tent poles went entirely thru her finger. We sterilized her finger with alcohol, slit the finger with the scalpel blade in the snake bit kit and pulled the fiberglass out with tweezers, then washed it with soap and water, swabbed it with Tincture of Benzoin and bandaged it. Also washed and bandaged the infected cut on Val's foot. (RM)

The day was enchantingly beautiful, the white cliffs were gorgeous and the weather perfect. From 9 am to 2 pm we cruised peacefully, with the girls from time to time standing in their canoes and singing tunes at the top of their lungs, and bouncing them off the canyon walls. Some of the tunes they sang or made up were as follows: "Day-Oh, day-ay-oh, Daylight come, and I want to go home!..." etc.; "I've been paddling on the river, All the live long day, I've been paddling on the river, Just to pass the time away..." etc (to the tune of "I've been working on the railroad"); Oh give me a Home, Where the Buffalo Roam...", etc: "Hi-lo, eeny-meeny-ca-ca, oom-cha-cha, wee-WAH-

WAH!, Hecta-minica, onica-zonica, boom-de-ah-da, -YOO-HOO!", and many others. They carried a pretty good tune, and all of us enjoyed the serenade as we drifted by the fascinating white cliffs. (Rumors were afoot that the girls went over to the far-distant side of the river 1/2 mile away from the rest of us so they could sunbathe without their tops.) (RM)

We paid for our indulgence dearly. At 2:30 a thunderstorm shattered the gorgeous day. We rushed past LaBarge and Citadel Rocks. Roger intentionally passed a marked campground, thinking it was the wrong one. Over the objections of the teenagers, Roger insisted on pushing on to Hole-In-The-Wall. When the party arrived at Hole-In-The-Wall, we realized that it was a geological feature, with no campground in sight, just a muddy V-shaped gorge. The teenagers had been right about the marked campground a mile back. There was no way to go back upriver, however. Ahead was a bleak river, with walls of rock and mud and thunder and lightning on all 4 sides of us, and Angie getting sicker and sicker. (RM)

We rushed to find a place to camp. Angie got sick and became cargo. We rushed to find a place with good shelter and level ground. We got to a place, about mi 65, and set up a tarp to get under. Roger and I, Val, made mad dashes down to the canoes to get gear and tie down the canoes. (VH)

After an hour, the storm passed. We had beef stew and brownies for dinner, cooked by Zella, Angie and Matt. The kids sat around the fire, and told jokes and funny stories for an hour to unwind. (RM)

Fifth Day, Wednesday, June 28, 1989, Canoeed 25.4 miles this day

Reached Camp 5, "APRIL'S AND GENIE'S BOTTOMS CAMP", Mile 90.5

Today in the morning everyone was tired and I was very cold. I know that everybody got warm by the fire. At lunch [at Slaughter River] Angie got hurt but Roger fixed her wound on her foot. (BW)

The girls caught the eye of a river guide on shore just as he put his finger up his nose. The girls were busted up over that for the rest of the trip. (GH)

We were on the river for 10-1/2 miles after we ate lunch. We came upon Judith Landing and we filled up on water. We came on a spot everyone hated so we left. [The girls found the tall grass claustrophobic.] We went through some rapids and found a spot. (BW)

I often overheard Stan saying, "I love it!", no matter what was going on. (ZM)

April and Genie scouted ahead and selected the campsite. Since we were planning to camp at Greasewood Bottoms the next night, we called this place "April's and Genie's Bottoms Camp". The girls were able to shave their legs and wash their hair on a nice cobblestone bar in the river. After the kids were in bed, the adults also washed up in the river. (Rumors were afoot that some of the adults were skinny-dipping.) A delicious dinner of Spanish Rice with seasoned hamburger and tomato dressing was prepared by Stan and Val and Brian. Cookies for dessert. It took Val three tries to get a bowl of rice, but the ants loved her for it. (RM)

Then a big storm hit and we were in the eye of the storm. This next morning it was warm and the sunrise was beautiful. (BW)

Sixth Day, Thursday, June 29, 1989, Canoeed 21.5 miles this day

Reached Camp 6, "LOST SHOE CAMP", Mile 112.0

Today the wakeup call was at 5:00 am. everybody was up except for the four girls (April, Angie, Val, Genie). Genie was the first girl out at 7:10 am. So today we are of to a slow but coming start. Right now it is Breakfast time and we are sick of oatmeal and we want bacon and eggs. there is mud that is up to your waist in places. we call the mud Missouri Mud. A few people's pants are ripping. Right now it is real pretty. there are different types of birds and fish are constantly jumping in the river. (MM)

While we are packing away our gear and stowing our tents, we still are late for our start. If we get off on to the water within the next hour I will be surprised. does that tell you how late we are at this point on our expedition. We finally made it on the water at 9:30 am. As we proceeded down the river we reached Galaveres rapids [Gallatin Rapids] at approximately 10:30 am. then at 11:35 am we reached Bear Rappids, then at 11:53 am we reached the Little Dog Rappids. Then we reached the Dolphino rappid [Dauphin Rapids] at 1:20 pm. (MM)

Then going down stream we reached our lunch spot which was the exact spot that Lewis and Clark spent one of their nights. [McGarry Bar, May 27, 1805]. Then we went to greesewood valley [Greasewood Bottoms], but like usual my dad did not want to sleep thier but this time he had a good reason their was a group of thirteen canoes coming down stream to camp their but even worse the group had a charter boat with three teenage boy which none liked except fro the four girls. (MM)

So then we went down river ten miles to a spot called no name campground ["LOST SHOE CAMP"]. across the river we saw a family of mountain goats, and I saw a mining cave. my dad saw it to. Then later every body put life preservers on and floated down river and to people lost thier shoes. Today was AWESOME and FUN. (MM)

Today was Grandma's birthday. No doubt in her honor, it is was the only day with no thunderstorms, and perfect weather from sun-up to sundown. For her birthday dinner she requested Chicken Stew (very delicious), which was cooked up by Roger, April and Kelly, and April made chocolate pudding for dessert. Afterwards, when everyone was in their tents, we filled the air with the Happy Birthday son, sung twice, for Grandma!! (RM)

Seventh Day, Friday, June 30, 1989, Canoeed 37 miles this day

Reached Camp 7, "JAMES KIPP STATE PARK", Mile 149

Today we got up at 5:00 and loaded the canoes. We all were tiered. Today will be a long day. We got on the water at 8:00 for the first time. We went through 4 little rappid that helped our pace. We had rest stops every hour for five minutes which usually extended to ten or twenty. The mud along the banks got worse with fewer gravel bars. The lunch stop was on then left bank just on the low side of Cow Island landing (a Lewis and Clark camp). (KW)

The 4 girls didn't eat and instead caught up on some "beauty" sleep. The afternoon was boring and hot. the wind in our face made the going hard. We saw 3 mountain sheep on our way to our campsite. (KW)

We stopped at an abandoned homestead at mile 135.8. All that was left of a large 100

year-old frame house was the brick and natural stone fireplace, the stone-walled basement, and an outhouse made of huge logs (a 3-holer). It was interesting, but wouldn't make a suitable campsite because of long portages to canoes. (RM)

We couldn't find a really inviting campsite because of the mud, so after a stop we decided to go for it. Only 12 miles to go. We filled up our water bottles and ate a big snack before setting off on the last leg of our adventure. (KW)

We called April cookie monster because she ate so many of Carol's cookies. (We all loved them.) The last 12 miles were actually pretty easy. The first 8 passed by with ease since the wind had died down. We passed the people who had past us on the 2nd day [camped on Grand Island] and we loved every minute of it, singing all the way past them. At about mile 4 [from the end] we decided to go silently because we had seen some beavers. (KW)

We went on that way for about 2 miles and during that time we heard probably 20 or 30 beaver slaps. Over half of these (we think) were produced by the same beaver. At the 2 mile [from the end] mark we decided to floor it to the state park and so we did. It was great to see people and hear actual cars. The almost daily thunder storm hit us except things felt pretty calm until the time we finally went to bed (10:00 pm we think). Then the wind picked up but I didn't feel much rain. (KW)

At the Kipp State Park landing a beaver was less than a canoe length from us, right at the bank. Beaver Sam watched Brian and I as we watched him, for perhaps 30 seconds, and then dove and disappeared under the muddy water. Brian had wanted to be at the landing first so I rowed hard and we were first at the upper landing. Since we did not use the upstream of the three landings at the park and as I got tangled up in canoe traffic as we moved downstream, Brian did not get his wish to be first. (CSW)

I used the sliding seat to row this trip. While an experienced heavy boat oarsman (shipboard whaleboat types) I had almost no experience with this rowing rig. I still have much to learn about it but think it is very good for non-white water use. (CSW)

While nice to see people, did not think it very great to hear cars. Some of the fishermen were very nice about letting our boys use their gear and even fed them a fish breakfast. Our thanks to them. (CSW)

Over the whole trip we've avoided the cotton wood trees because of their deadly "widowmaker" reputation. This state park, however, has put us in the midst of a grove.

Luckily only one twig fell on us through the storm. (KW)

We were at James Kipp State Park for a night, a whole relaxing day, and another night. The first night was mainly taken up with putting up tents, eating dinner, checking out the campground and getting to bed. The boys enjoyed watching the fishermen along the banks during our entire stay at what some called "Moth Camp" because everytime you lifted anything off the ground, swarms of moths flew around like little tiny bats. They even hid behind the roll of toilet paper in park's toilet, and swarmed out when the roll was turned, which the girls hated! (RM)

Everyone slept in as long as they wanted! The next day we had a whole relaxing day to kill. All of the kids decided to walk 3 miles down the hot dusty highway to a little bar where they could buy pop (\$1.00) and candy. They were gone 4 hours. (RM)

The grownups made lemonade with cold well-water and sat back with feet up and relaxed. A restful day was had by all. The next morning we were up at 6 am to get ready for our car shuttle drivers, Alice and Bernie Bach, who were scheduled to deliver our cars to us by 9:00 am. They arrived at 8:30 am sharp. We were finally loaded and on the road by 10:00 am. Excitement was provided during the loading by a fisherman who showed us two huge paddlefish. One of them must have weighed nearly 100 lbs. (RM)

During our trip downriver, we had seen a number of truly enormous fish fighting their way upriver, each leaving a huge wake in their trail because of the shallowness of the river. We never knew if they were paddlefish or sturgeon. One of them nearly upset one of our canoes! (RM)

We arrived back at Fort Benton with our shuttle drivers and had hamburgers at a stand right across the road from our initial launch point a week earlier. What a neat way to close the trip. We looked at the Keelboat "Mandan" by the river and checked out a nearby frontier museum, then headed for the long drive home - over 1000 miles to go! (RM)

People have mentioned in early entries about the good meals that were cooked at night. Much of the food, including this food, was prepared by Zella in the month or so before the trip. All we had to do was take it out and heat it up. Thanks go to her, not only for this food, but for her work, planning and foresight that put this show on the road!!! (CSW)

Lessons Learned for Next Canoe Trip

1. Sterilizing eating utensils is done by Bob Singer's group as follows:
Supplies: Small bottle of Purex chlorine bleach and 2 old metal buckets.
Method: Mix 1/2 teaspoon bleach to 5 gallons river water in one bucket to form disinfecting solution.
Put other bucket of river water on fire and bring to boil. Boil for several minutes, then remove and let cool.
Now cook dinner and serve.
Wash dishes in disinfected water.
Rinse dishes with boiled (but now cooling) water.
2. Large map case with means to suspend it in view while canoeing.
3. Apples are good fruit to bring, and easy to manage.
4. Food: Prepare separate labeled box of

food for each day, with separate packages for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Prepare daily lunches and Gorp packages for each person, in separate pouches, labeled w/ magic marker. Use Zip Lock or seal-a-meal.

5. On a long trip, bring sturdy clothes and shoes in good condition, and a clothes and shoe mending kit.

6. On a river trip, bring strong tennis shoes that lace so they can't come off in mud or strong currents.

7. Good idea to bring a number of small bars of soap. Then all eggs are not in one basket if they get lost.

8. Map of area for each canoe.

10. Double-bladed paddle for each canoe's Stern position.

11. Tupperware box to hold personal eating utensils.

12. Whisk brooms nice for tent.

13. Mini-Lawn chairs were great.

14. Some liked the idea of radios for music to paddle to.

16. Extra batteries for camera, flashlight, etc.

17. List of group equipment, and person responsible for it.

18. Vaseline Intensive Care Lotion would have been great for cracked skin, which the Missouri river mud caused when it dried out your skin.

Things We Liked The Most and Hated The Most On The Trip

Zella Matthews: Like the wilderness, the scenery and the people, and hated the rattlesnake, the wind and weather and mud, and not being able to see the maps.

Stan Wetherell: Liked the mountain goats, and hated the mud.

Roger Matthews: Like the singing on the river, the white cliffs, the people, the adventure, and the fact that nobody was badly hurt on the trip, and hated the bad weather and the mud in the campsites.

Val Hayes: Liked standing up and singing, the homestead, and watching the Beavers slap the water, and hated the bad weather.

Genie Hayes: Liked the 4th day in the white cliffs, and the 5th day without any storms, and hated the driving rain all day on the 3rd day.

April Rhoades: Liked it when it was fun, and hated the paddling and the thunderstorms.

Angie Wulfekuhle: Liked being able to finish a day early, and hated the bad weather.

Kelly Wulfekuhle: Liked getting home, and hated the trip. (Editors note: Kelley really seemed to like the singing on the trip, especially, "I've been paddling on the River...", etc., and she hated the thunder when it was close.)

Matthew Matthews: Liked floating down the river in lifejackets at the LOST SHOE CAMP, and hated the mud. (Editors note: You could have fooled me, I thought Matthew and Brian LOVED THE MUD the way they played in it all the time!)

Brian Wetherell: Liked the 4th day when we relaxed and went through the white cliffs area, and also liked "Push Day", the last day when we pushed all the way to the state park and SLEPT IN, and I hated the mud.

Old Missouri River Paddling Song:
"Oh Shenandoah, I love your valley,
Wey-ey-Hey, You rollin' river,
Oh Shenandoah, I love her truly,
Wey-ey-Hey, I'm Bound For Home,
Cross the wide Missouri!"



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The UN High Council on Refugees cites 50 million refugees worldwide as of the middle of this year. Of that, five million are from the Mideast in 2015. North African and Middle East refugees have flocked to Europe and most of them came through Greece. Greece, whose economy is in total shambles, cannot deal with this inundation of poor and starving people and simply pushes them into Europe with Italy, another country with very limited resources, as the first stop. The European Union (EU) has tried desperately to care for these immigrants but lacks both the power and finances necessary to cope with the flood of humanity. Couple these problems with the resistance of western European countries to add significant numbers of uneducated, poor, culturally and religiously different people to their populations.

Sweden, with extraordinary social services, has complained loudly about those seeking the Scandinavian benefits. Finland, the most homogeneous country in Europe, is also stunned by the influx. Finland, for example, is 98% Lutheran, one of the most highly educated countries in the world, is the technological center of Europe and has the purest DNA consistency in the world. Muslims in unusual dress needing expensive care and housing are not welcome there. The tension between the refugees and locals is palpable.

This whole issue is problematic in that all European navies are caught between being Good Samaritans rescuing people in danger on the high seas and the political realities of what to do with the refugees. Sending them back to countries of origin is tantamount to a death sentence. This has caused significant personnel concerns among Navy crews.

Syrians escaping the internecine war between a murdering tyrant and ISIS are landing and staying on the Island of Kos, a part of Greece that is economically destitute and politically unstable. The focus is on the EU, which is holding the country together with monetary duct tape. The only plausible moral solution is the push for peace in the regions, thus keeping their people at home. This is why we are fighting in the Middle East whether we really want to or not. The EU pressure on the US is at the highest levels since WWII. Even the Pope is demanding that western countries do more. Talk about being caught on a lee shore!

Environment

In the realm of "no good deed goes unpunished," EPA made yeoman efforts to stem the potential flow of toxic chemicals and heavy metals from abandoned mines in Colorado, only to create a monstrous landslide that was diametrically opposite of its intentions. The landslide poured three million gallons of mercury, arsenic and other dangerous compounds into the Animas River that serves as the water source for many towns, irrigation supplies and invaluable nutrients for animals and plants. The mustard colored water flowed for dozens of miles, crossing state lines and complicating responsibilities for cleanup. The lead toxicity alone is 12,000 times above acceptable levels. Surprisingly the EPA took full responsibility for the problem, but whether the federal government will pay for the damages remains to be seen.

Starry Stonewort, green algae that looks like dense weeds, has invaded Wisconsin and Minnesota lakes. The long plant like stems grow to several feet in length and is so impenetrable that boats can literally get stuck in it,



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

but the greater problem is that it stifles reproduction of most fish, sucks nutrients from the water and disrupts the basic ecological system of a lake or stream. According to experts at the University of Wisconsin -Madison, an effective method of killing off these algae is unknown but ensuring that boats don't carry the weeds from one body of water to another can keep it from spreading.

The Coast Guard blocked a portion of the Mississippi River near Paducah, Kentucky, when it discovered that over 250,000 gallons of oil had leaked into the water. Two towboats collided near mile marker 937 holding a tank of one million gallons of slurry oil. A Coast Guard spokesperson stated that they feared as much as 25% of the contents entered the water, forcing the closure of 16 miles of the heavily trafficked main channel. The unknown amount of time necessary to clean up the mess has created river barges backed up on both sides of the closing.

Accidents

In the realm of "it seemed like a good idea at the time," six teenagers in Ft Lauderdale decided for a late night joy ride on a 13' Boston Whaler. It ended very abruptly when it smacked into a bridge, killing one and seriously injuring the other five. Unfortunately the kids were not related to or known by the boat's owner. Florida authorities are very quiet about the case leading many to suspect that criminal charges will be filed.

The Chinese government is being severely quiet and menacingly uncommunicative regarding a huge blast at the Port of Tianjin that was reportedly equivalent to 20,000 pounds of TNT. At the least 100 people are dead and hundreds injured as fireballs three to four times higher than the tallest buildings sent debris across the city. The port, the tenth largest in the world, is an international logistics center for all of Asia and houses many chemical storage units and fuel dumps. The area includes warehouses and offices of China Offshore Oil Engineering, Cosco Shipping and SinoTrans that were all destroyed. The explosions were so immense that several satellites picked up the images from space and earthquake computers registered the trauma at a 2.8 level quake.

Twenty four crew members of the Panamanian bulker *MV Focomar* were found alive and well on the island of Socotra after stations lost signals from the ship. Evidently the crew abandoned the ship when engines failed and they were drifting at sea with limited communications. A Sana radio caught their SOS and informed the Italian Navy who subsequently found the men. The 2011 built ship departed Djibouti for Singapore on July 27 but communications were lost in early August. The sailors were without food or water but otherwise in good health when rescued. UAE tug *Mubarak Challenge* found the stricken ship and took it in tow.

Fire aboard the *MV Wonderful Stars* carrying 544 passengers forced some crew and guests to jump overboard. The Cebu based Roble Shipping vessel was on its way to Ormoc. Interestingly, there were no casualties.

The Bosphorus Straits were closed after a Sierra Leone flagged cargo ship, *Maied and Randy*, rammed an Ottoman era mansion built right on the shoreline. The large ship with co rudders was on the Istanbul to Beirut route when it lost steerage. The bow smacked into an upper story of the house doing significant damage to it but sustaining only minor damage herself. Authorities also noted that no pilot was aboard.

Seatrade

Crude oil tankers have enjoyed high earnings over the last few years but the goose that laid that golden egg has competition. The rise in the total number of tankers and the capacity of these tankers is already hammering at profits. Maritime experts anticipate a growth of tankers from 1% to 5% over the next two years. The good news for ship owners is that the orders for future keels increase until after 2017. Still, US shale oil production may hold down import demands.

Rijkswaterstaat, the governmental office in charge of infrastructure maintenance and development in Holland, awarded a contract to Consortium Open IJ to build another canal to Amsterdam that they feel needs additional access. The EU is helping with the funding under their Ten-T program.

Cargotec's MacGregor received a contract from the Chinese financial group Yangfan to build five post Panamax 7,800 CEU car/truck carriers that will be operated by Italy's Grimaldi Group. These 200 meter ships will be the world's largest car/truck ro-ros featuring four decks with elevators to move vehicles around on the ship. If these ships are successful the shipyard is expecting orders for seven more of this class.

CMA CGM Group, a French shipping company, announced substantial profit increases over last year. Citing a net profit of \$156 million, the group's figures note a 66% increase due to a greater shipping volume up 6.2% and lower costs at 7.8% CMA CGM will soon accept several new ships including one 2,100 TEU, one 9,300 TEU and two 18,000 TEU ships that will make it France's largest container ship company.

SCI (Shipping Company of India) stated that profits tripled in the quarter ending June 30. Their numbers indicate a net profit of \$25.2 million. Some of this increase is accountant's magic. SCI now calculates the life span of a tanker at 25 years instead of 20 years. SCI owns 69 cargo ships and 35 tankers.

History

General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said that the key to winning World War II could be stated in three words, "Logistics, logistics, logistics." Another wise person said, "Amateurs talk strategy, professionals talk logistics." A pilot friend says he loves America's war efforts wherever they may be simply because the US simply does not have the logistics capabilities to move supplies overseas, therefore the Defense Department needs to hire private companies to haul food, medicine, equipment, munitions, weapons and people. Worse, Congress loves military spending but they prefer new aircraft carriers, guided missile cruisers or submarines but no one wants to spend money on tankers, supply

ships, transport ships, freighters, cargo vessels, etc. It's like the universities, multi millionaires jump all over themselves to build a new library wing or building with their names above the doors, but nobody jumps up to spend cash on new heating facilities or parking lots.

Interestingly, the D Day invasion of Europe could not have occurred without the lowly LST (Landing Ship Tank), a flat bottomed floating box that could run onto the beach and open its massive bow regurgitating dozens of tanks, trucks, supplies and soldiers. Never appreciated until they were needed, the LST was neither fish nor fowl in naval thought. It was too big to be classified a boat but lacked the credentials to be called a ship, thus it was merely called a "craft" and received only a number rather than a name.

When the planners of the invasion recognized the importance of these "craft," the US had virtually quit making them, opting for more destroyers and carriers. Industrial shipyards were set up to make "ships" and not "craft" and their owners were reluctant to change machinery. President Roosevelt had to order the halt of destroyer production to focus on LSTs but too few were available for the European assault. Worse, CNO/CINCUS Admiral King refused to relinquish LSTs in the Pacific, leading British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to mutter, "The fate of two great empires hinge on some God damn thing called an LST."

As they say in golf, "Drive for show, putt for dough." The carriers and battleships were mighty impressive but they could not land troops on Pacific islands or on Normandy beaches. The unsung heroes of WWII were the "Long Slow Targets," the LSTs.

White Fleets

The cruise ship world has found New Zealand where ship visitations are up 33% this year. Five new ships have added this island as their first stop. *Ovation of the Seas*, at 1,100', 168,000 tons and beam of 136', is the largest vessel of its kind to make a stop-over. Putting it in perspective, The *USS Iowa* class battleship, the largest ever built by the US, was almost 900' long and displaced 55,000 tons.

New Zealand is raking in cash with a \$22 per passenger tax and a \$62.62 (weird figure) per visitor as a pollution tax. This was all legislated prior to the increase in visitors and probably will be reconsidered before too long.

Dubrovnik Croatia, a medieval city so designated by UNESCO and cited as a World Heritage Site, is another new stopover for the sea travelers. Two German liners, owned by TVI Cruisers and Holland America, recently anchored there.

The University of Southern Maine offered an internship on the cruise line industry. Students sailed on a cruise to the Caribbean for college credit. This too good to be true tale is actually a bona fide training program created by USM that collaborated with Holland America and AAA of New England. The cruise itself was a capstone of a two semester planning exercise on creative concepts in cruise experiences. Holland America hosted a \$40 per plate dinner and AAA donated \$2,000 to the project.

USM administrators see the university as a pipeline between college and entrance level jobs in the cruise industry. The internship shall continue to be a hands on experiential learning mode. Gee, the only pipe-

line offered at my college in the 1960s was from the dorm to boot camp barracks, and the travel opportunity was to Southeast Asia.

Big River News

A massive fish kill along the Whitewater River in Minnesota has the Department of Agricultural and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency scratching their heads. The kill included thousands of Rainbow and Brown trout, suckers, chubs and dace along a one mile stretch of the river. Worse, two cows in the same vicinity aborted their calves the same day. Experts note that disease has been removed as a possibility for the kill.

Lansing, Iowa, a tiny town on the Mississippi on the northeast corner of the state (you can see Minnesota and Wisconsin from any high point in the town) is the scene for a \$620 million revamping of the Interstate Power Company's four unit power plant. The coal powered works will shut down three units and will install a selective catalytic reduction and dry flue desulfurization component. Another \$6 million will be used to create an environmental mitigation project.

Interstate Power is a subsidiary of Alliant Energy and they were forced into this action by a court's ruling supporting the EPA. Interstate had to pay a \$1.1 million dollar fine for pollution violations. Evidently, from the look at the income statements of Alliant, these costs are pretty minimal. According to the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, *Gazette*, Alliant has doubled its value in ten years plus pays a nice 3.4% dividend. A million here, a million there is irrelevant.

Mother Nature occasionally trumps high technology when it comes to monitoring her own well being. Twin City scientists have noted that the bivalve muscat clams up tightly if something isn't right in the water. Simply monitoring the muscat at various water intake sites allows plant operators to increase or shut off the plant. Interestingly, the clam is far more effective than mechanical and computer systems. Was it not Abraham Lincoln O'Brian who said, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time. But you can't fool Mother Nature." Ouch.

A jet skier near Winona, Minnesota, fell off his ride several times and had difficulty remounting. Some boater called the police and when they arrived the skier was swimming behind his craft. After failing several sobriety tests he was arrested for two DWI counts. They discovered he already had five DWI convictions and five other motor vehicle convictions. Needless to say, boaters and sailors in the area are shocked and surprised to learn that someone who is drunk would ride a jet ski. The sarcasm is all mine.

If jet skiers don't scare you away from the river, sharks might. Bull sharks occasionally swim into fresh water rivers looking for food. People living along rivers in Alabama and Florida have many tales to tell about catching a fish in the river but having it snatched by a shark. Several dog lovers are reluctant to toss sticks into the water for fear of these predators. Bull sharks have been seen as far north as St Louis.

Most people are unaware of the Driftless Area in southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin and extreme northeast Iowa. This area is characterized by deep river valleys and high bluffs ranging from 600' to 1,700' and has some of the most scenic areas in the US. Paleozoic era glacier lobes smoothed off

much of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and most of Illinois thus giving those states plentiful flat land for farming. The Driftless Area is hilly and heavily forested (the remnants of the Great Hardwood Forests). Unfortunately most of the land was clear cut during the first part of the 20th century and non native maple trees replaced the hardwoods. The hills all along the Mississippi are replete with Native American burial grounds in shapes of animals or birds. The Effigy Mounds National Park near Marquette and Macgregor, Iowa, is a wonderful place to see these mounds and learn about people who lived along the Mississippi 2,000 to 10,000 years ago.

Gray Fleets

Much whining has come from naval circles and veterans groups regarding the naming of ships. All levels of politicians, experts by self designation, have suggested that the Navy needs more rowboats, dinghies, battle-ships, etc, etc, etc, ad nauseam. Many entities have faulted numerous Secretaries of the Navy about inconsistencies in naming procedures. Now SecNavy Ray Mabus has "clarified" the situation.

First, Congress complained that the US had no small frigate class vessels in the fleet and suggested we build some like Sweden has done. So Mabus announced that some of the previously identified landing craft would now be called frigates. Mission accomplished.

Now the Navy has decided that more changes are necessary. Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV) will be known as Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF), the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) will be called Expeditionary Transfer Dock (ESD) and the Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB), a variant of the MLP, will be known as an Expeditionary Mobile Base IESB. SecNav also established a new designator call an "E class" ship similar to the "L class" amphibious ships, "S class" submarines and "A class" auxiliaries. The "E class" ships used to be sea basing ships.

Quite obviously SecNav is attempting to update and modernize nomenclature of our fleet. If nothing else, it confuses the hell out of the enemy.

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Chapter 1.1

This is supposed to be a Winter Project. And since it's only the tag end of August as I write, I'm sort of rushing the gate just a bit. But some things happen on their own schedule. Apparently this will be one of those.

Speaking of winter, whenever it gets here, this will be our seventh one living on the hard, here in Almostcanada. If I measure that in boats I get a bit misty eyed. I've turned something like two or three out for each of those six prior winters. And other than just a couple, none of those girls are still with us. They've all gone off to other homes. Well, not quite all of 'em. But enough have left the fleet that I think this is the floating equivalent of the Empty Nest Syndrome.

I started getting serious about reducing the fleet last spring. Kate sort of took me to task and pointed out that one guy really can't "use" more than a dozen boats. And she was probably right. In a fit of rational thinking, I started giving boats away. And trailers. And motors. Then an ancient scientific principle took charge of things. Osmosis.

You'll remember osmosis from your high school chemistry class. Where stuff, like water molecules for instance, goes from a greater to a lesser concentration. So it was just a natural scientific fact. If there were more boats out in the world, and I had fewer of 'em, they'd just naturally show up around here. It's science. And inevitable.

Speaking of science. My personal academic background is in what the engineer types call the "soft sciences." Psychology. And I'm pretty sure they're right. It's not the same as building a highway bridge or a moon rocket. But we "behavioral" guys do have our place in the world and this particular boat project is sort of a case in point. If you want somebody to accept an outrageous idea you have to get 'em to identify with it. So I dug down into my vast store of scientific fact and figured that if I named this next boat after Kate, I'd get that necessary buy in. OK. Not totally brilliant, or particularly original.

But I really do think this one is gonna be worthy of being a namesake of the Lovely and Talented Kate, except for the fact that I can't seem to decide what it's gonna look like. I've got the name already stenciled on my forehead. I even have the girly flowery typeface picked out. Even the hull and trim colors. All I gotta do is settle a small issue of what kind of boat this is supposed to be.

In the vast pantheon of Frankenbot possibilities this current project hull is a real gem. It started out as a pretty respectable 21' keel boat from the early Golden Age of fiberglass sailboats. An interesting sheer, svelte prismatic, nice deck contour details and almost best of all, a designed-in motor well in the lazarette.



The Birthing of Miss Kathleen

By Dan Rogers



Sometime in her past somebody allowed a large quantity of water to collect in the bilge and freeze. The keel was split wide open. And she'd been apparently gouged by sharp stuff alongside a dock or rock pile. There are quite a few deep cuts and other bruises to be repaired. But under all that is a hull that simply shouts, "easily driven, seakindly and, above all, elegant." So there you have it.

Miss Kathleen. She's either gonna be reborn as a Victorian Launch, Edwardian Gentleman's Launch or a pocket trawler. Sort of a big range of possibilities.

The Victorian Launch would resemble this commercial version of what is called a "hunter cabin launch." Something like this.



The Gentleman's Launch has an aft cabin with period piece joinery and brightwork. Sort of like this.



Another pretty cool notion, but just when I think I've got the matter settled there's this little Poulsbo Boat that was rehabbed and transmogrified by Marty Loken in Port Townsend, Washington, 15 or more years ago. As it happens, I had *Lady Bug* on display right next to that very boat in July during the Pocket Yacht Palooza. *Little Salty* is a real looker. And I can come up with a list of reasons why *Miss Kathleen* could look a lot like this.



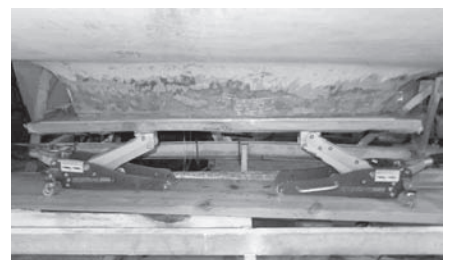
But that's still a way in the future. First off, there is the not so small matter of the keelotomy operation that I performed a while back.



First order of business is to suture the wound. At first, I figured that I could sort of just put the hull on the shop floor, tip it up and glass over the stump. But this hull still weighs a half ton and is three and a half fathoms from stemhead to transom. Kind of a big package to be swinging around casually. So sanity prevailed and I decided to do the initial glass work while still on the trailer. Sheesh!

My Social Security card says that I shouldn't be clambering around in a rusty jungle gym with a grinder and saw and gooeey glumpy slabs of 'pox and cloth. And my knees agree with this. But sometimes there's just not a better idea. So I went from this to the operating table.

Knees and birth date notwithstanding, I think I've got a plan together that's gonna work. The board that's sitting on a pair of floor jacks (that are sitting on another board, that's sitting on the trailer frame) is actually a sort of pallet. More a serving platter. It has Saran Wrap on it as a release agent and is holding the first layer of many to come of 'pox and glass while it cures. Hopefully the keel stump will become a bit of vestigial fin to keep the bow from sliding shamelessly off to leeward. And a place to put some of that 750lbs of ballast back into.





Anyhow, that's what I ginned up this morning before breakfast. I imagine that there is a whole bunch of work yet to be done before I get much buy in from Kate. But you never know.

Chapter 1.2

I was just looking out the kitchen window, waiting for the coffee pot to "go into radiate" and for the sun to come up. A chapter from a Jack London tome read in boyhood keeps coming back. London is describing the tenacity of an Alaskan sled dog. Somehow, once broken to the traces, a dog will gamely crawl back into his place in line even with a broken leg. The only way to reward such loyalty was to shoot the dog. I'm feeling very much like one of those dogs at the moment.

The night shift ran until close to midnight. And if I could only bend my fingers enough to hold a cup, I'd take one with me out to the shop as the pre dawn darkness turns to lighter gray. I'm buried in a project that makes perfect sense to me. This current Frankenbot initiative is one that I have daydreamed about for half dozen years.

And yet I came into the house late last night, covered in metal grinding dust and had Corpsman Kate extract a small cinder that I had allowed to lodge in one eye during a moment of inattention. I had continued to run the Sawzall without putting my goggles back on after inspecting the cut line. Instead of, "there, there, now, now," all she had to say was, "Maybe you should give this one up..."

No, at least not yet. Much like an accomplished sculptor would see his final opus in his mind's eye by simply fondling the block of marble, I'm quite certain this will make a quite lovely boat. But what a stopper in the bottle things have become at this current stage of the game.

Like so many of these holdups, the whole problem was condensed to one or two lines on the shop whiteboard (where the Planning Department guys write up the marching orders). 1) Remove 1/4" steel plate reinforcement web and keel cradle from trailer. 2) Lower hull supports, create new hull support bunks, paint trailer, remount hull." Didn't look all that hard, but Jeez!

Hours and hours of crawling under that boat and finding a perch inside the trailer frame while turning Sawzall blades into crumpled, burned up, smooth toothed remnants resulted in a small (but growing) pile of heavy steel chunks, slivers, slag and a distorted pipe wrench. My supply of cutting wheels and grinding discs had also migrated to the detritus on the floor.



The whole idea was to get *Miss Kathleen* lower to the ground, now that a once deep keel has been reduced to a vestigial stub. And, I hasten to add, that particular process of cauterizing that rather gaping wound was accomplished from the same ergonomically challenged perch(s) from under the hull and inside the trailer frame as the cutting and grinding of last night's Masochism Tango.

Ah well, almost ready to move on to Number Two on the white board. Just the small matter of needing to hang the boat in the air for a couple days while I figure this one out. A brand new chapter in the ongoing saga of building Frankenbot's on the fly. By the way, anybody seen a Husky with a busted leg?

Chapter 1.3

It's nighttime and I'm pleased to report several things. Quittin' time came early, 2030. It's Sunday so the Sup gave me the night off. He doesn't seem real gung ho himself but it's been a hard day and even the boss needs his beauty sleep.

This whole boat building exercise could become moot in a matter of minutes. Hopefully not, but the Pacific Northwest in general, and eastern Washington in particular, have been experiencing the most devastating wildfire season in history this past several months. We are literally surrounded by uncontrolled fires totaling hundreds of square miles. But today is one to put on the plus side of the ledger. It rained, rained some more and then even a little bit more. So far we've been lucky. So far life goes on more or less like normal. So far *Miss Kathleen* proceeds.

I've been guilty of a perverse sort of building routine on occasion. I do on occasion put a roof up in the air and then build a house under it. It's pretty much how I built our cottage in the woods. And it turned out OK.



And then there was *Roughneck*, the almost tugboat. The rough "roof" was literally hoisted into the air and a boat built under it. And *Roughneck* turned out OK, too.



But I had to draw the line at rebuilding a boat trailer with the damn boat still on it. After that Masochism Tango with the keel and then the keel landing platform on the trailer last night, I finally got the hint. It would be waaaaaaayyy easier to just hang the boat up in the air while I cut, and grind, and saw, and blast my way with the trailer.



And in honor of this temporary lapse to logical thinking, and proper order, I was able to change the once keelboat trailer from this to this.



I even got the new, shortened rudder in place. Scientifically reduced to 12", another bow to logic, as one foot is way easier to remember than, say, 14 3/4" or something.



Another day or so and you just never know, we could, maybe, put this hull in the water and see where to sling the roof. Well, I gotta go, the boss says we have business to attend to out on the back lawn.

Chapter 1.4

c I got a lot done today, but about knock off time, I came very close to being put out of business. Maybe for a long time. It's a cautionary tale, probably worth the telling. There is a vital hitch, though. Think of it like trying to be absolutely safe from airline crashes. Yeah, stay out of airports. Like that.

What I did today, that was pretty painful as it was and could have been cause for a trip to the ER, is almost inevitable for anybody who ever attempts to modify, repair or restore a boat trailer. You just about always need to drill holes in them. Little holes for fasteners to secure lights and wiring. Middling sized holes to mount rollers, and bunks, and safety chains, and stuff like that. And then, sooner or later, you will need to mount something truly heavy duty. Unless you have a brother in law who not only owes you money, lives next door and can weld, you will have to occasionally drill a 1/2" hole in the frame.

I was just finishing the last of half dozen of those mean as a wasp nest 1/2" holes. My goggles were fogged up, I was sort of lying and sort of kneeling in a lousy position. My brand new extension bit was already dull so I was instinctively pushing harder with what leverage I had. And because the big bit was already dull, this hole had been piloted with a series of smaller drills. "All I had to do" was step it up from about 3/16" to 1/2". A short aside and confession.

About a year ago my hand therapist fired me as a patient. He told me point blank that if I was going to continue using that high torque drill motor free hand on steel that I "shouldn't come crying back to him." And until today at least, I've been pretty cautious. I use U bolts whenever I can. I set up each session with the full knowledge the damn thing is gonna kick. This particular "last hole" was no different.

I did have the pistol grip braced against the side frame. I did have the secondary handle braced against the same member. I did have my left hand situated so that I could let it kick free. But like I was saying, my goggles were fogged up, I wasn't in a remotely comfortable position and I'll admit to feeling rushed. I had just negotiated an additional hour before coming in for dinner. Half of that hour was already used up.

So when that big drill bit got to the point of breaking through, it certainly got out of alignment. When it grabbed, my set of precautions went by the wayside in an instant. Instead of coming to a stop against the trailer frame as planned, the drill motor

spun about two or three more times. Both hands took the brunt of the assault. As I looked down at my left glove, there was already blood dripping out. That's the wrist that I crushed a few years back and has a steel plate and dozens of screws in it to hold all the itty bitty bits together.

My first thought was, "There goes your writing career." The second, more to the point, "This looks bad and I really don't want to pull that glove off." It was bad, but the point of the story is that it could have been a whole lot worse. And it can happen to anybody. I can happen to me, again.

This is the scene of the crime, later in the evening, pretty innocent looking. The tool is just as I left it, after realizing that my hand(s) had been smashed against the angle to the right. Yep, it could have been a whole lot worse.



Once upon a time I had this idea for a portable, clamp on drill press/milling machine sort of contraption that I could make holes like this with. I've gotta do something. I may have to swallow my pride and ask the therapist to take me back. He'll probably bust all my fingers just to keep me "safe." None of my relatives can weld.

Chapter 1.5

It was just the coolest thing. I've just got to share this one. Yesterday, as I was saying, I did a damn fool thing with a really powerful tool. And, truth be told, anything that can punch a hole through a steel I beam, can certainly have a nasty effect on the soft tissue of a 68 year old hand. I thought maybe if I wrote about it, maybe somebody else might somehow manage to avoid a similar fate. Maybe.

As a clinically confirmed introvert, I naturally don't have a large list of friends and social gatherings are something of a challenge. So, to avoid becoming a complete boatshop hermit, I do maintain a rather extensive correspondence. I sent the text of my riff about getting smashed by a high torque drill motor to a handful of folks that I felt would have some sort of resonance with that sort of thing. The responses have been truly quite wonderful. Not the way we most of us bond via this particular milieu. Perhaps we should from time to time. I'll excerpt a few, without names, see what you think:

"... we couldn't very well say anything critical as we both either have or can see ourselves doing the same thing..."

"Ouch, sorry about that. Men who work with their hands (real men) do these things. This is another of those lucky unlucky things. Glad you are still with us and with two hands. Pushing harder on the dull bit, utilizing step up bits, this sounds like me. And sometimes I think that I am the only meat-head around. But how many times do we get away with it before...bang?"

"I recall an older Montgomery Ward 1/2" drill we had that was the same way. Thing would beat you like a red headed stepchild if you weren't careful."

"Innywho, just as you did, I had both handles firmly placed, both hands were gloved w/elk skin ropers, goggles in place, wearing jeans not shorts and I was down on both knees for bracing. 1/8", 1/4", 3/8", 1/2" and now for the biggie, the 5/8" (which I had to go back to town for since I couldn't find the one I thought I already had and that new one was fresh and sharp) as the D*#@ thing got to that infamous spot it grab'd and sent me spinning, the handle pressure was so strong on the inside of my hand it broke the bone connecting my wrist and my ring finger, green stick, splintery fracture that was pooching out on the back of the hand. I duct taped it in the glove and finished the project, five more holes and mounted all six tie down anchors. I SHOWED IT!

"Did I tell you I was at the barn, 36 miles from home by myself? Went to my orthopedist the next day and the Xrays confirmed my suspicions, he wrapped it in an ace bandage and I had to wait two weeks for the swelling to subside so he could go in and put it back together w/three little tiny screws. On the weekend in between the accident and the surgery I rode my sidecar rig to a rally in Galveston. I NOW have one of those very expensive tapered drill bits with steps that makes this type of operation much safer. It is like that country song ... I knew what I was doing ... but what was I thinking!"

"I like the 1/2" drill. It makes for exciting times. Rated a #7 by the Darwin Awards Committee. Mine is a Bosch, a more sneaky innocent green instead of the OSHA Yellow. Unlike the chop saws, the half inchers have no safety items you can remove."

"I remember hanging in a bosun chair drilling holes in 3/4" steel on the back side of the lock wall. We had a drill that looked much like a drill press but it was held in place with a very powerful magnet. The thing weighed about 50lbs. Try to handle that from a boson chair..."

We do, in fact, travel with a very colorful group of boat folks. Now, don't we?

I'll try to get the *Kathleen* project back on track without further masochistic tendencies displayed. We're a long, long way from

being done. But after the night shift, tonight, I can report that the trailer is painted and the bunks and keel platform are close to the right position and shape.



In a bow toward safety, I set the hull down on the keel stub while working on the trailer. I discovered that the nominal draft will be just a hair over a foot and a half. Not too bad. If she floats like I think she will, anyway.



I've already been caught sitting glassy eyed in the cockpit, daydreaming about getting this little girl underway. And, now that we are on a probably operational trailer, the next step is to go on down to the launch ramp and see if she can float off. And continue floating. That would be a good thing.



Chapter 1.6

Ok, I'll admit to being at a sort of nexus this morning. It's almost dawn, the sky over the trees to the east is just starting to lighten. I've been up for about an hour. And I suppose the expression "all dressed up and no place to go" has some relevance here. In about the past week or so I've managed to bring a disregarded old sailboat hulk from a pine needle collecting device perched on a rusty old trailer out in the woods to the matrix for something much better. There was considerable effort, bruises and blood involved. A lot of hurry up.

The big push was to get something ready to float test. Maybe even to sea trial a bit before relegating it to the shop for further complete renovation during the fall Building Season that is close upon us. Part of that test is to check for leaks while the bilge is completely empty before any ballast, tankage and internal supports are added. To do that effectively, I need to get the boat off the trailer and into the water. At this point that leads to a couple what if's.

What if I set the bunks and keel supports too high and the hull won't float off without a lot of shoving, cussing and wading on my part? There's no carpeting or rollers installed yet. I may still have to grind, sand, saw or remove sections of the rather intricate web of steel and red fir 2"x6" lumber.

What if the hull does, in fact, slide into the water and refuse to reload without radical efforts with strategies like disconnecting the trailer (probably 1,500lbs empty)? Or, heaven forbid, what if it's necessary to back the car into the lake to get the axle deep enough to get the hull back on? And while I'm fooling with those issues, working alone as per normal, what if the boat begins to take on water through someplace I only think I have sealed up? Stuff like that.

In the meantime, it's started to rain. And rain is literally a Godsend around these parts. We're in the midst of the worst wildfire season in the history of the state. Rain is such a good thing, nobody in their right mind would do anything but cheer. Except for the not so small matter of needing a dry hull interior for the leak test coming just as soon as I can see my way to the lake. All just a bit confusing.

0530: The rain has quit and blue sky is poking through. We are hooked up and ready to roll the half mile up the road to our local launch ramp. Somehow it doesn't look or feel a lot like the week BEFORE Labor Day. About 40° this morning. The neighbors' tomatoes are still all looking pretty green as we head up our gravel road for the pavement. Gonna get down to freezing tonight. This leak test is getting more time sensitive all the time.



0540: At least there isn't anybody else down here to get impatient with me for hogging the ramp. I still don't know if we'll float, leak, even sink...



0545: Huzzah! We're floating, this is water. You haven't been here in a long, long time. Not a proper launching. Not a proper christening, no way. But you are floating. And leaking...



0605: Back to the barn and back to the drawing table. It was running pretty solidly from someplace in the toe of the keel stub

outta sight behind a rotted old plywood partial bulkhead. Up where I kinda wondered about when I was splayed uncomfortably under the trailer frame attempting to glop 'pox and heavy bi ax cloth into a keel bottom shoe. Up there someplace.

There should be several more opportunities for a leak test, float test, before the ice forms. I hope.

Chapter 1.7

1330: This morning's fast cruise was pretty instructive. I wanted to know if M/K would, in fact, float free of the homebrew trailer. And I'm pretty sure she would. Probably. Dunno for sure. Maybe. We'll see when she's loaded, and ballasted, and rebuilt. I also wanted to know if she was gonna leak from my battlefield amputation and stitching up job. And I'm quite sure that she would.

While I could say for a fact that both tests were completely successful, I did come home a bit hang dog. It was hard enough getting that bottom patch onto the keel stub while the trailer hull supports allowed enough space to actually crawl in and do stuff. Now that there is actually NO clearance, things require a degree of greater creativity. I'll credit Mississippi Bob for breaking my stall out. His advice is direct and to the point. "Goop on some more thickened epoxy, and try it again." Yep, that's the stuff.

I was fresh out of the official thickening stuff, getting to do this job over again is pretty thinking all by itself, but I do have a whole bunch of that 17oz bi ax cloth and a small dab of 'pox. And since the final layer of lamination on that stub had smoothed out pretty well before, I figured I could try something like that again. The genius thing about this process is a sort of one sided burger press that I invented on the fly.

The first time around a "squisher board" was forced into place from below with jacks,

wedges and a high degree of wishful thinking. But after some helpful hints about Darwin Awards and a few close calls with things like drills and hammers and such, I'm pretty reluctant to work on the hull when it's not on the trailer. And there is now a 10' long keel tray on the trailer that involves a bunch of steel weldments that I had to remodel forcibly with grinders, Sawzall and plain old fashioned metal fatigue. Not the sort of thing a guy wants to take apart again.

Sooooooo, what if I used a double sided burger press? One where one side is the boat and the other side is the trailer. Where the weight of the hull provides the squish. Of course, a lot can go at least slightly wrong, that's what keeps this project interesting. For starters, the bottom surface of the keel stub isn't even close to flat. When I folded the cloth around the ends, things sort of bunched

up there more than they did in the middle. And since I was cutting and shaping and generally using methods learned from watching reruns of Monster Truck Demolition Derby, where I could only really see parts of one side and only actually touch even less than that at one time, we're not exactly parallel with the waterline either. A bit wavy and a bunch twisted. That makes getting a board covered with trash bags and 'pox soaked bi ax cloth exactly positioned and squished uniformly almost outta the question.

1430: And the scene of the crime is so hard to get to that I'm surprised enough photons could squeeze through the rails to allow a picture to come out.



The burger press and all the gooey, glumpy stuff is waaaaaaayyyy back in there. Someplace that my tired frame was promised not to have to go anymore. A promise I was never gonna be able to keep.

All this effort is to somehow staunch a probably #6 sheet metal screw sized hole someplace on the underside of the keel. I'd like to think that the rest of it isn't quite this crude, rude and socially unacceptable and that some of the surplus photons rattling around under there over emphasize the bi ax strands. At least I hope so. Because I don't think I'm going to be able to get Bosun the attack poodle to crawl under there and do the fixing. Even though he did promise to do it.



This is the starboard side, with squisher board wedged and cajoled into place to put pressure on the inherently wavy underside. "Stir, simmer, allow to cool..."



Chapter 1.8

It takes a lotta guzzintas. In this case, it's guzzinta dawater. And out. And back in. Dry. Repeat. And then we come home and lift her off and drill more holes, albeit with great trepididdity, preparation and with the lowest powered drill that can spin the bit. Mostly holes are punched on the drill press these days. With clamps, and drill vise, and sharp bits, and safety gear, and...

But like that purloined verse that I pinned onto the Texas 200 home page, "...his wounds are almost healed..." Sooooo it's not all about idle chitchat that I iterate the lessons learned, shared, compared and repeated about drilling holes into steel with mechanical devices of greater power than aging wrists and metacarpals and connective tissues can control. Anyhow. *Miss Kathleen's* remodeled trailer is just about figured out. And it's taken the better parts of a couple work days to get this far.



I suppose the REAL TRAILER GUYS already would have this stuff figured out. In my case, I find myself locked in "long passionate gazes" with leftover rollers, and clamps, and odd sized bolts of inconvenient threat count. I've been attempting to put this part of the project together with stuff from the "spares locker." Actually, a lot of it has been languishing in piles, heaps, on shelves, in boxes, coffee cans and worse.

The supports for the bunks came from pieces sawn out of base frames from an HF shop crane that got expropriated for use on *Alice the Tractor*. And a lot of the "official" trailer parts have come up surplus from any and all of the half dozen boat trailers that wandered into my crosshairs and got redone, repurposed and ultimately sent away with boats of similar etiology. As a result, the left side don't always exactly match the right side.

The main reason we keep coming and going to the launch ramp is to decide how to make the boat roll easily in and out of the water while riding as solidly as possible during those over the road interregna. You see, my sophomore geometry teacher, Mr Robertson, made me a promise of sorts. Back in high school he offered to give me a passing grade if I swore on a stack of Euclidian tables and theorems and postulates that I would never take another math class from him again. You could say that my arithmetical acumen is somewhat deficient. Where the RTGs can probably figure this stuff out with a tape measure, bevel square and a few properly fitted parts, I have to pretty much do it by intuition.

The biggest wunderwhat has been the changes in bearing and trim angles as the

stern sections enter/leave the water. This is also a function of how deep the package is immersed and ultimately a function of the ramp angle. And I have to sort of guess how this will modify itself when essentials like motor, and gas tanks, and dry socks, and Dinty Moore cans are added, not to mention the hundreds of pounds of lumber, plywood, 'pox and glass and general boat stuff that will sooner or later inhabit this rather fine ended hull.

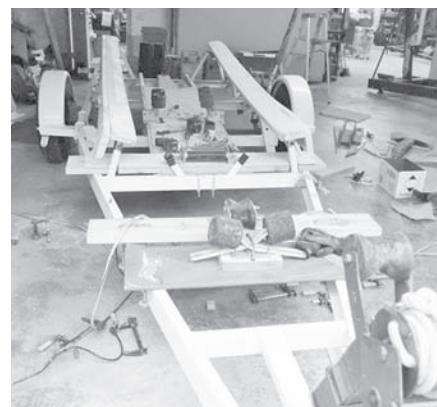


The hurry up has to do with the calendar. I really, really want to not only have the trailer figured out, but to have a real live test run under power in the logbook before Old Man Winter reclaims the launch ramp. Actually, the Department of Fish & Game is taking on the role of in loco parentis for the ramp these days. For some undecipherable, bureaucratically obtuse reasoning, the guy with the lock comes and shuts the gate sometime in October. To protect the ramp from excessive wear and tear maybe? You'd think a guy would notice all on his own if the ice was too thick to launch a boat into, now wouldn't you?

There is a reasonably complex set of constraints that I'm turning into progressively jumped through hoops on the way to this particular Frankenbot opus. She's gonna be something else! Garronntee...

Chapter 1.9

Today probably gives SSDD a bad name. And at one point I was pretty certain that SNAFU had self upgraded to FUBAR without even holding a staff meeting. But then, I wasn't about to go to any meetings. I spent much of the day crawling under a now familiar boat trailer, crawling back out to get another tool from the shop and then back under until the pile of tools under there started to get in the way of progress.



Perhaps there's a synoptic message here. When you find yourself engaged in the "finishing touches" of an absolutely brilliant solution to a difficult problem that you

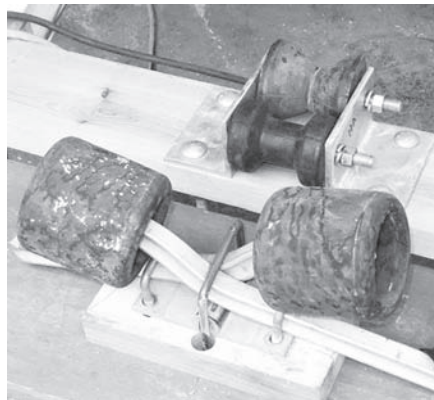
are certain nobody else has ever attempted in quite this manner, STOP! Put your tools down, walk briskly away, go take a nap until the suppressed reality makes it obvious why nobody has attempted this before. You know. THAT MESSAGE. Somehow, I not only didn't get invited to the meeting, I didn't get the memo either.

As a putatively floating object with complex curves and variable buoyancy become progressively immersed, the whole angle of dangle gets messed with. That's why I was under that trailer most of the day. Variable buoyancy.

As I back this trailer with a 22' hull poised for departure into the lake, there's a moment when the boat must decide if she will actually leave home or not. Let's just say that the ramp declines into the water at a constant 15° or so. As the trailer continues to roll deeper into the water, the stern of the hull begins to float. That's actually the mission. But for a while the rest of the boat is still sliding downhill with the trailer. Assuming you don't want to end up on YouTube, you'll stop the downward plunge before the car gets wet. This puts the weight of the bow on the forward supports, the stern behaving like a boat, and it's now time to let your little girl leave the nest. In the case of *Miss Kathleen*, there is a pretty deep forefoot section that basically drops like a stone until the much broader midsection is floating properly. As this is happening, the bow is looking for a couple of stair steps of some sort to bang down across first. Hence, the reason I was under that trailer all day.

I was in the process of inventing, manufacturing and installing a series of home brew rollers that should guide the boat into the center line as she comes back aboard the trailer and make the slams against the trailer cross bars much more agreeable by substituting rollers, chocks and lotsa large bolts and nuts. While it did take at least five times longer than the planning guys so confidently predicted only last night, things were actually looking "put together" enough to try a test fit.

Here's the deal. The only reasonable way to get a boat that will weigh around a ton to climb on and off a boat trailer is to have it float most of the way. Anything fixed to the trailer that is supposed to guide the boat along the centerline has to stick up high enough to engage the keel and low enough not to impale the hull when no longer floating. Enter my genius contraptions.



Each one was dreamed up to guide and support the boat while riding around on the trailer, and while coming and going. Rollers that would progressively align the foil-shaped stub keel into the center line. Things were looking real good. Until.

Until I set the boat back down on the trailer and discovered a game ending flaw. The rollers worked like magic while the boat was still partially floating. When the lake is removed from the equation, the hull is perched on the roller tops. Not a good idea. I spent the next couple of hours trying every which way to make this idea work. Not happening. Meanwhile, the boat had to be lowered and lifted about a dozen times.



After a while even I get the message. This just isn't gonna work. On to the next idea, finally.

This is a closeup, down at the "molecular level" where I can't even put my hand, when the boat is on the trailer. Painfully simple. No moving parts. It guides the stub keel both up and down, but also side to side. It's made out of scrap plastic, temporarily stuck in place for a float test. It'll probably work just fine for years like most temp fixes seem to.



This is that same view, from about as close as this kid can wriggle with the boat in the way. Sometimes being ahead of the pack just doesn't prove so much. Anyhow, this whole marathon with the trailer was simply to allow for quick in the water tests of the hull. First I need to look for leaks in my rather large patch job done to the bottom of the now truncated keel. Then I'd like to do a short "sea trial" with motor in place to see if the rudder is going to be adequate, how high she sits with and without ballast and stuff like that. So it was off to the ramp again and then again.



Even after several repatching attempts there is a small leak at the bottom of the keel. But she floats and maneuvers pretty well under power. Time to get on with the next step in the program.

To celebrate our somewhat looping progress, before I knocked off the night crew I had 'em sand and apply fairing goop to the many blemishes and scars this hull has been sporting. A light resanding and a primer coat of paint are next. Things are looking up.



Last fall I was walking along a Long Island Sound beach with my eight year old son looking at driftwood. He asked me if we could collect some driftwood to build something with. This was the latest in a series of weeklong summer hobbies. A bit earlier it had been stone working, which had led to several stone chisels still sitting in the garage. But as we were talking something began to take hold of me. We talked about building a model boat. And then, as we talked this over, father and son, something turned in my head and I asked myself, if we could build a toy boat maybe we could build a real boat? Nothing grand, mind you. Just something, anything, that could keep a father and son afloat on the water.



The concept is not that complicated. The simplest boat can be not much more than a rectangular box, open on the top, with just a little bit of curve to it to help it move on the water. How hard could it be?

Not that I believed for a moment that it would be easy, especially for someone who hadn't built anything out of wood in 25 years and even then only a barely passable book shelf. But possible. Possible. It must be possible if I studied up on how it was done, chose a simple and manageable plan and set about doing it. It must be doable if I set my mind to it. And from that moment, walking along the beach with my older son, the idea took hold of me.

I told my wife, who seemed skeptical. But I was undaunted. So, like everyone these days, I started poking around on the internet to see how it could be done. People have been building boats for thousands of years. For most of that time and in almost every part of the world there have been two basic ways of going about it. You can build a shell and then reinforce it with ribs and a frame. Or you can start with the frame and then build planks (the shell) onto the frame. For the last few centuries it's almost always been the latter approach.

I got interested in this history a decade ago when I read a short, delightful little book by Lionel Casson called *The Ancient Mariners: Seafarers and Sea Fighters of the Mediterranean in Ancient Times*. It goes back to the earliest history of seafaring, albeit focused mainly on the Mediterranean, and goes up through the end of the Roman Empire. Fascinating, fascinating read. What I learned in my internet poking around, though, was that in the last half century a slightly novel approach has been developed, mostly for amateurs and people making smallish boats, based on three innovations; plywood, epoxy and fiberglass. It's called "stitch and glue" boat building.

The basic idea is that you build a hull by "stitching" planks of wood together with short strips of wire and then, once it's basically in the shape you want, you epoxy the pieces together along the seams. It all turns on the strength and malleability of epoxy which, in a sense, allows you to build the shell and the reinforcing frame in a single, combined step. A bunch more is involved and I'll get to

Building a Small Sailboat

By Josh Marshall
Reprinted from *Talking Points Memo*
<http://talkingpointsmemo.com>

that in a bit. But this seemed doable. I could understand the basic concept. There were no specific skills that seemed beyond my ability to learn or tools I couldn't get at the local hardware store. And it was presented as something explicitly aimed at amateurs, not professional woodworkers and boat builders. So now I had my basic plan, a path forward.

Because the whole subject fascinated me I read a bunch of books about traditional and modern boat building, the kind of sailboats you might buy if you had a lot of money. But while I was doing this I was also hunting around for plans for building a boat. There's a dispersed cottage industry of people who design boats to build on the "stitch and glue" model. You can buy books about it and plans for particular designs. The internet is full of them and I looked at a bunch. But I finally found one company that seemed to do it at scale. They had different designs and they sold materials. They were a going operation and seemed to have lots of customers. So I figured this was the safest bet. Their plans must be fairly reliable and there'd be someone I could call if I got in a jam.

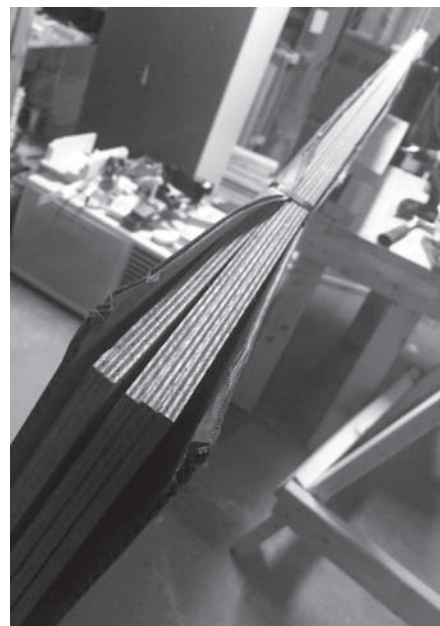
The place is called Chesapeake Light Craft out of Annapolis, Maryland. All the designs are by the founder, as near as I can tell, a guy named John Harris. I'd already bought one or two plans from some solo operators I'd found on the web. But even though I'm sure those other designs would have produced great boats as well, this seemed like a better bet. CLC sells kits and plans. The kits have all the wood pre cut and all the supplies you need. But the plans, basically about ten sheets of blueprints and a booklet with basic instructions, felt more like really building a boat. So I decided to order just the plans and build from the ground up, just a roll of blueprints and a small booklet, some wood and patience.



I ordered my plans in November. But I figured I should bone up my non-existent woodworking skills a bit first. So I built a work table and some sawhorses with wood and tools I bought at the local Home Depot along with a few other small projects. I was already a bit impressed with what I was able to do and I was enjoying it. There was something about the tactile quality of it, the creativity and the finitude.

I've always loved and been drawn to creating things, a way to challenge and also reinvent myself. When I came home from my sophomore year of college I decided I would build an underground sprinkler system in the home my dad had just bought, just because it seemed like an improbable and crazy thing to do but I thought I could. Friends' incredulity provided the thrust I needed to move for-

ward. If you put one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward you can surprise yourself with what you can do.



So now I was ready. I ordered four 4'x8' sheets of what's called marine grade plywood (okoume, to be specific) from a huge plywood dealer out on Long Island and got down to work. (The entirety of the boat, with the exception of some thin mahogany strips and a few scraps of oak, are from these four sheets you see in the picture above.) If it crosses your mind to try doing this, I wholeheartedly recommend it. If you choose one of the more basic designs you can absolutely do it with no prior experience whatsoever. All that is required is patience, a deep reservoir of it. If you have that, one of the great pleasures of the process are all the incidental skills you learn along the way.

The first is called "lofting," basically the process of taking what are often the highly irregular or sloped shapes on your blueprints, drawing them onto wood and then cutting the pieces. The big challenge is the planks or "strakes" as they're called. These are seven or eight foot long strips of wood, usually seven or maybe eight inches wide with long sloping curves, which themselves often tighten over the arc of the plank. So how on earth do you transfer the shapes?

Here's how.



Take one of your 4'x8' sheets of plywood and carefully draw out a grid marked at foot long intervals. The blueprints give you coordinates on your grid at which you tap in small nails. 2⁷/₁₆" up the third line from the bottom and so forth. Then you take a batten, a long, knot free, bendy and thin strip of wood, and arc it along the nails to get your shape. You either put heavy objects to keep it in place or put more nails on the other side of the batten. Sort of like calculus, you break odd parabolic shapes down into a series of fixed length straight lines. Concrete, precise and beautiful.

It's a bit painstaking. And you need to be really, really precise in your measurements and markings. But there's also an odd beauty to the precision and clarity of it. So last December I bought a few power tools, hammered together my sawhorses, plotted out my shapes and rough cut most of the pieces of a small 8' sailboat.



But something happened as I began work. I started getting sidetracked onto other projects. As I got more focused on all the safety issues using power tools (air quality, which is a serious thing, and having power tools in the proximity of young children) I started using mainly, and then only, hand tools. I had set out only to build a boat, a pretty tall order in itself. But as I worked with the wood and started to see the different things you could do with it, especially with the refinement of traditional hand tools, I began to get hooked.

So as the snows began to pile up last winter, I threw myself into teaching myself at least the basics of traditional woodworking. My first project was to make myself a true woodworking bench, without which it's hard to do any real woodworking projects. You just can't hold things in place properly to work on them. Then I taught myself some traditional joinery and other skills building boxes, tables, mallets and other small projects.



I cannot think of the last time I had what I would call a hobby. At first my hobby was history, but it was also my profession. Then there were years hustling to find some footing in journalism and name for myself as a writer. I have never been able to work at something I didn't love or was driven to do. So hobbies and avocations and work were all the same thing. Then there was *TPM* (*Talking Points Memo*, the author's political blog). And for a decade and a half *TPM* has been both my work, my hobby, my living, in a word, my everything. As work, it is all words and symbols. I love it. In some ways I am it. But there's nothing physical or tactile or concrete about it. Woodworking was filling some void in me that I hadn't known existed.

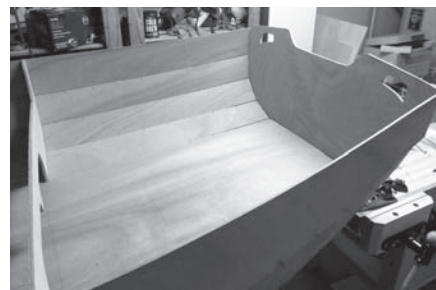
By March I was living and breathing woodworking and starving for the weekends when I could get back to it, something I have little experience of. I even had my own YouTube mentor, a traditionalist woodworker from the UK whose instructional videos I pored over closely. But it was also getting close to summer and I'd committed to building the boat that started me on this journey. A dozen years ago, after four years with my dissertation and PhD on hold and with a journalism career well underway, I reached a point where I knew if I didn't finish now I simply never would. The logic of life and time would overmatch me. So I set aside time and finished. So with some reluctance, but a similar pull of commitment, I set aside my keepsakes boxes and tables and got back to work on the boat.

It was an interesting return because I came back to it through a totally different prism. When I started in November every aspect of woodworking was new to me. By late spring, though I was still certainly a novice, I'd spent almost six months thinking, breathing (unfortunately, literally in some cases) and practicing my woodworking skills in every available moment I had. I knew a fair amount about it, especially how to do a lot of very precise tasks using hand tools alone. So I could see the whole thing in a fuller perspective, with more understanding of what I was doing and even the ability to add some of my own additions or refinements as I went.



The first step was stitching together the planks to build the hull. You put a rabbet joint (basically a small notch) on the lower edge of each plank which allows them to fit together.

Then attaching the transoms (the flat front and back ends of the boat) gives you the basic shape of the boat you're making. Getting all the parts to align just right is a bit of challenge in itself and while I was trying to figure that out I went back to my other projects several times. But after each was done I was basically back to the boat in some form or another every weekend since April.



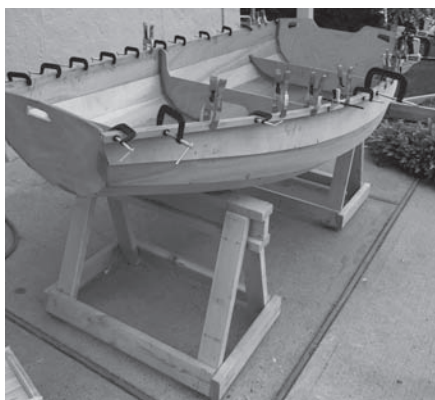
Once the hull is in place, stitched together with the small strips of copper wire, the next step is to fill the joints with slightly thickened epoxy.



This is where the structural strength of the whole thing comes from. The transoms get connected up with a thicker version of epoxy and then the bottom of the boat, inside and out gets sheathed in fiberglass. The woodworking I learned in the winter and spring is almost entirely wood and glue. Even nails and screws get used only sparingly. The boat is an entirely different story. Power sanding tools, epoxy of different kinds, fiberglass, a decent amount of mess and toxic modern materials. I'd fled to hand tools to get away from all that. But I simply put on my respirator and gloves and plowed through. And working a bit with fiberglass you get a sense of just how amazing this stuff is and how many things you can do with it.



Next is attaching gunwales or rails on the top edges of the hull. I did it with two strips of mahogany on top of each other, which made it possible to bend them without any steaming or treating. As you can see, it requires a lot of clamps and a lot more epoxy.



Then you put in the bulkheads and seats and you've got something that looks pretty much like the boat you're trying to build.



Between the seams of epoxy binding together the strakes, the fiberglass on the bottom of the hull and the reinforcement of the mahogany rails, the boat is actually quite strong, even though it's all built out of marine grade plywood that is only 6mm or 9mm thick. The rest of the strength comes from the next step, when the entire body is sheathed with two additional coats of epoxy.

But there are a couple key things that come before that.

Remember, this is a sailboat. And a sailboat needs a keel to pivot off the sail to provide forward motion. A sailboat this small usually has a retractable keel called a daggerboard. And for it to be retractable, this design has a locker built under the middle thwart that is basically an open hole from the seat down into the water.



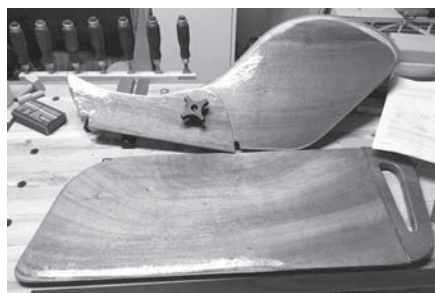
When you're in motion (and in more than a couple feet of water you drop the daggerboard through the slot and you've got a keel. I also had to add a skeg (a small fin on the underside of the boat for directional stability) and a couple of skids to protect the underside of the hull from scrapes and rocks.



Next, epoxying the entire thing.



This is how this stitch and glue process really works. You have a wooden boat. But really it has something more like a wooden core. It's completely encased in epoxy and fiberglass which makes it exceptionally hard and durable and at least fairly resistant to impact, with an emphasis on the "fairly." With all that done, all that's left is priming and painting the underside, varnishing the inside (mainly to protect the epoxy from sunlight) and building a mast, a daggerboard and a rudder.



Almost all the work I did since last March. So all told it took me about five months of weekends to get it done. When I first started I thought rough cutting out the pieces was the bulk of the work. But that wasn't even remotely the case. Something like climbing out of a vast canyon, you keep thinking you see the plateau at the top only to

get closer and realize it's only one of many on the way to getting out. You're nowhere near done. But finally I was done.

Altogether it was an amazing experience. As I mentioned, when you buy plans from Chesapeake Light Craft you get blueprints and a small booklet of instructions. The instructions are not always overly detailed and there are definitely parts where whoever was writing the instructions was unintentionally assuming some knowledge a novice might not have. It's so obvious to him or her that they didn't think to mention it. This led to a few moments of frustration. But as I went along I was glad the directions weren't that specific. Because those small gaps had to be filled in with common sense and experimentation and just a bit of tinkering.

And this was where the magic of the build really came in. Overall, I'm really glad it was this way rather than any other. Because it's not just a cookie cutter step by step enterprise. You have to reason through and use your common sense and tinker to get things to work. In other words, you're really building a boat from scratch. You have a plan and blueprints and they show you the basic way to do it. But you're really building a boat, from scratch. And that's an amazing feeling.



If any of this seems inspiring or interesting to you and you're considering trying it yourself, I heartily recommend Chesapeake Light Craft. They seem to be the biggest operation in the business, which means their boat designs have been built by lots and lots of people. And they work. They also sell parts and kits and all of that gives confidence if you're launching off on something that you simply have no idea how to do. Notwithstanding the small gaps I mentioned in the instructions, the instructions had to be pretty clear because I went into this knowing nothing and I built a boat, which I took out on the water for the first time and it floated and worked like a charm. The few times I was really stumped and didn't know the right way to do a particularly step correctly, I emailed or phoned the folks at CLC and they answered my questions. Seriously, if you want to do this, do it with them.

After all that work, it was a bit daunting to put her in the sea water which is corrosive and rough and full of rocks which can make easy work of this shell of a boat, even

reinforced with epoxy and fiberglass. But from the start it wasn't simply building it I was after, I wanted to sail her. I know nothing about sailing. I don't know most of the vocabulary, though I picked up some of it through the building. I know nothing about how to hoist and coordinate sails on boat with two, three or more sails. But a couple times I've gone on vacation to places where they had Hobie cats you could use. This is sailing at its simplest, a single tall sail on two pontoons you pivot against a keel and a rudder. With brief instruction you can get the feel of it because it's really all about feeling the tension in the sail and how it moves on the water as the thrust from the sail works against the rudder and keel. This sailing pram is a single sail. So it's a similar proposition.



It took me a couple times out to get a feel for handling the rig. But the third time out I got it. And it was, quite simply, glorious. She's fast on the water and handles beautifully. Months building her all felt well spent.

With a single sail and right against the water, you feel the water and the wind in your muscles and brow. This is what I wanted.

Editor Comments: Long time reader Kinley Gregg emailed me as follows: "This boat building article strayed onto *Talking Points Memo*, a political website. It reminds me very much of the articles you publish in *MAIB* and I thought you might enjoy reading of the blog editor's first boat building project, his doubts, distractions and perseverance."

I agreed and thought you also might enjoy it. I requested reprint permission from its author/publisher, which was readily granted. If you would like to see the original with photos in color go to: <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/building-a-small-sailboat>.



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That's a Fact!

Useful information about WEST SYSTEM Epoxy

By Mike Barnard

Reprinted from *Epoxyworks*, Journal of Gougeon Brothers



Using Gelcoat over WEST SYSTEM

It's a myth that if you plan to gelcoat over a repair, you must make the repair with polyester. We've used gelcoat over epoxy for decades, shown it in our instructional videos on repairing fiberglass boats, and discussed it in past issues of *Epoxyworks*.

There are three key factors for success with gelcoat over epoxy. First, the epoxy needs to be mixed on ratio. Second, it should be fully cured, and third, the should be free of amine blush before applying gelcoat.

Gelcoat manufacturers shy away from approving the use of non-air inhibited gelcoat over epoxy because they're concerned amine blush will interfere with the gelcoat's cure. All that's required to remove the blush is washing the surface with plain water. The resulting surface is inert epoxy that can be sanded to accept paints and gelcoats.

Release fabric can also be used to remove amine blush quickly and easily. As the epoxy cures the blush forms on the outside of the release fabric. When the release fabric is removed it takes the blush with it and the resulting surface is ready to be prepared for paint or gelcoat.

Epoxy's Penetration into Wood

Epoxy does more than sit on the surface of wood. Some of the epoxy will remain on wood surfaces, and some of it will penetrate into the wood. The amount of penetration depends mostly on how the wood fibers are oriented. Face grain will not absorb nearly as much epoxy as end grain. But since WEST SYSTEM Epoxy® has very high strength and excellent adhesion, it strengthens the wood and makes it water proof.

Epoxy Batch Size and Cure Speed

In larger quantities, epoxy will cure much faster. This is because epoxy generates heat as it cures and also cures faster at higher temperatures. This snowball effect increases until the epoxy cures—which in very large batches could be as short as

a couple of minutes. Large pots of mixed epoxy can generate enough heat to cause a runaway exothermic reaction, smoking, melting the mixing cup or even starting a fire. Spreading epoxy thin allows the heat to dissipate and slows its cure.

Epoxy Casting and Shrinkage

WEST SYSTEM Epoxy has a very low percentage of shrinkage. In fact, the standards used to measure shrinkage of other resins (polyester and vinyl ester) cannot be used with WEST SYSTEM because it shrinks so little.

When epoxy is used to fill holes drilled into wood, it soaks into the end grain and this can give the appearance of shrinkage.

Back in the late '70s and early '80s, Gougeon Brothers, Inc. manufactured over 4,000 wind turbine blades and their molds using WEST SYSTEM Epoxy. It was commonplace to see a 70-foot long mold shrink $\frac{3}{32}$ " over the entire length. That is shrinkage of .01% on a laminate consisting of fiberglass and WEST SYSTEM Epoxy.

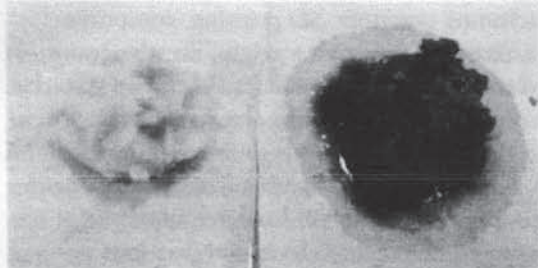
When casting epoxy, heat buildup can become an issue. Excessive heat can make WEST SYSTEM Epoxy shrink some. Pouring epoxy in great depths creates the potential for the epoxy to get very hot due to the exothermic reaction resin and hardener have. The shrinkage that does occur generally happens while the epoxy is still liquid, but when an intense amount of heat is present, epoxy doesn't stay liquid for very long. As the heat dissipates, the difference in temperature between the top and bottom of the casting can shock the now solid epoxy and it may crack. This can be avoided by making deep castings in layers.

Adding Sawdust to Epoxy

While it's possible to add wood sanding dust to epoxy to change the color and viscosity, it does pose a risk when bonding to an absorbent substrate like wood end grain. Adding wood dust to epoxy doesn't increase the viscosity; the epoxy is just being absorbed into the wood dust leaving it free to drain back out on absorbent surfaces. For example, if you blend sawdust into epoxy to achieve a peanut butter consistency and place the mixture on a dry paper towel, you will notice that the paper towel soaks up a lot of epoxy as it cures. Because the sawdust is not actually thickening the epoxy the way our fillers do, the epoxy runs out of the mixture with ease. If this mixture were used on a joint, given enough time, the epoxy can drain out of the sawdust creating a glue-starved joint with a puddle.

An exception to this is our G/5 Five-Minute Adhesive. It is more viscous to begin with, remaining liquid for only about five minutes, so there is not enough time for the epoxy to drain out of the added wood dust fibers.

With products like 105 Epoxy Resin and 205 Fast Hardener, a more reliable way to thicken epoxy is to add 406 Colloidal Silica. The particles interact with the epoxy rather than absorb it, thus increasing the viscosity of the epoxy. Then a very fine sanding dust or wood flour could be added to tint the mixture if needed.



On the left is epoxy mixed with our 406 Filler. On the right is epoxy and sanding dust mixed to the same consistency as the filler. Notice the puddle of epoxy draining out of the epoxy/sanding dust mixture.

Adding Extra Hardener

While adding extra catalyst to polyester resins can lead to faster cure, it doesn't work to add extra hardener to epoxy. Epoxy reaches cure when the resin molecules crosslink with hardener molecules. When there is too much of either resin or hardener, unlinked molecules are left, which can result in uncured epoxy or compromised cure strength. Always be sure to mix resin and hardener as close as you can to the recommended ratio.

Clamping Force

Unlike traditional wood glues, WEST SYSTEM Epoxy is stronger than wood. Because of this,

it is beneficial to have some epoxy between the objects you are gluing together whether they are wood, fiberglass or other materials. As long as the epoxy is contacting the entire surface of both substrates, no clamp pressure is needed. With epoxy, the goal when clamping is to simply ensure the epoxy contacts the entire surface for the duration of the cure time. Moderate clamp force is all that is required. Using high clamp pressure may cause glue starved joints, especially when using unthickened epoxy. Glue starved joints are weaker than their counterparts. Avoid glue-starved joints by following the one- or two-step bonding method described in the WEST SYSTEM *User Manual & Product Guide*.

Filler and Epoxy Strength

While certain fillers will increase the density of epoxy, this does not correlate to higher physical properties or increased adhesion strength. Epoxy is strongest without filler added to it, but the fillers are necessary to increase the viscosity of the mix, prevent the epoxy from soaking too far into the wood, bridge gaps and prevent glue-starved joints.

Epoxy and Rotted Wood

Rot eats away the cellulose fiber in wood. Since cellulose is the structure of the wood, replacing it is not as simple as brushing on a coat of solvent-thinned epoxy. Solvented epoxy can restore some of the strength, but it isn't a permanent repair because it won't restore the strength of the wood fibers. In order to make a permanent repair, the entire rotten area should be replaced with fresh wood and sealed with epoxy. Doing the repair in this manner may actually make the repair area stronger than it was before the rot occurred.

Rot needs four major components in order to continue growing: food, moisture, oxygen, and warmth.

Cutting off one of these components is enough to cause the rot to go dormant. Solvented epoxies are supposed to cut off rot's food source by encapsulating and contaminating the wood that the rot spores consume. The remaining three components: moisture, oxygen, and warmth, can still penetrate the wood coated with solvented epoxy. This is because solvented epoxy is a poor moisture barrier. Rot spores will remain in the wood, and even when encapsulated in solvented epoxy, they will only go dormant. The spores that are not isolated will continue to devour the cellulose and "rot" the wood. This is why we recommend removing the rotten wood and replacing it with fresh, rot-free wood that is sealed with a few coats of WEST SYSTEM Epoxy.



Towing over to Canada.



Welcome to the Canoe Club clubhouse and dock.



40 – Messing About in Boats, November 2015

Buffalo Maritime Center News

By Greg Grundtisch

Keels and Wheels

On August 22 the Buffalo Maritime Center enjoyed its fourth year attending Keels and Wheels, a very pleasant event at the Buffalo Canoe Club in Pt Abino, Ontario, on the north shore of Lake Erie about 12 miles northwest of Buffalo, New York, as the boat sails. This waterfront location is simply beautiful, also offers good swimming, fishing and in crystal clear 80° water. The day was perfect for all aspects of the event. There were cardboard boat races, model boat races and a major Lightning regatta as well. The club provided live music, food and beverages and the Maritime Center offered sailing on two of their historic sailboats, the *OK Clark* and *Scajaquada*, and boat rides on the electric launch *Electra* for all who wanted to get out on the water.

There was a little bit of drama on Friday, the day before the event. The Maritime Center's volunteers arrived at the Canalside docks early Friday morning to take three boats over for the Saturday event. The day was bright and sunny with strong winds out of the southwest, the direction that we were headed. With the wind at 20 knots and gusts much stronger and waves at 6'-8', the open boats had a difficult time just tacking out of Canalside at the Inner Harbor. When we got out to the Outer Harbor breakwater we found things much more challenging.

After several attempts to "test the waters" before heading out onto the lake, we decided to abort the trip. The high winds and higher waves working against us from the direction we had to go made the decision easy to call off the trip. The thought of sailing three hours in an open boat across the lake in these conditions was not wise or appealing. We watched the *Scajaquada* turn back toward the Inner Harbor and saw the white *Electra* headed in our direction and Roger Allen at the wheel telling us to "enjoy the sail behind the breakwater and return to Canalside when you're finished having fun." We immediately turned around and went in.

Dick Wiesen sailing *Sequel*, a cat schooner rig.



After a brief discussion at the dock upon our return to Canalside it was decided that we would tow the boats over early Saturday morning when the conditions would be better. So early Saturday we connected the *Scajaquada* and the *OK Clark* to Mike Mayer's towboat and had a very leisurely two hour tow across the lake to Point Abino. After securing the boats to their respective docks we climbed back aboard the towboat and in 20 minutes were back at Canalside to gather up family and friends and return by car to the Buffalo Canoe Club to relax and enjoy what was to be a perfect summer day.

The lovely and talented Naomi and I arrived at the Canoe Club to find the Regatta was ending, the Buffalo Maritime Centers boats were preparing to go sailing and the *White Electra* was already loading up with folks wanting a ride around the bay. We arrived later than we planned as we had to make an extra trip or two due to the bad weather conditions on the day before. At least the weather and wind worked out for the day, by day's end the wind had died to a dead calm.

While standing at the dock watching all this, we got to talking to Dick Wiesen and Rebecca Montague. We had noticed a new boat at the dock, it was Dick's latest build, a cat schooner and a very pretty little ship she was! John Montague's Caledonia Yawl was also there and was looking very pretty as well. John had been having a problem getting his mizzen mast to fit correctly and never had a chance to leave the dock, except by rowing.

Dick's boat, on the other hand, was ready to go and go she did. She made remarkable speed with five adults on board. The boat trimmed well and maneuvered well in and around the boats moored in the harbor. After putting this new boat through some test maneuvers and tacks it was decided by all that the boat sailed just as well as she looked. Dick did a great job building this boat and the detail and beautiful finish is close to perfection.

This event has been a lot of fun and enjoyment over the years and is a great place for sailing and all types of on water fun. The Canoe Club puts on a really classy event every year at a remarkably beautiful location on the beachfront of Lake Erie at Point Abino, Ontario.

John Montague rowing his Caledonia yawl after the show.





OK Clark and Scajaquada.



Brian McGowan and Naomi bringing the Nomans Land boat, the *OK Clark*, into the Inner Harbor.



A boatload enjoying a sail on the *Scajaquada*.

After the sail, Owen Mylotte retrieving a halyard caught in the throat halyard block.



Summertime Tuesday Evening Sails

Every Tuesday evening in the summer the Center takes their boats out with people who want to go for a sail on just a regular day sail. Officially it is the Center's Open Sail, free to the public sailing program, a promotion of sorts to get a little public interest in the Maritime Center and its programs. During these sails we talk up the Center and its offerings.



Tuesday evening dockside preparation.

What does this line do?



Gary Kresses captains the *OK Clark* leaving the Inner Harbor for the Lake.



John Montague sailing the *Scajaquada* out of the slip and into the Inner Harbor for the Tuesday evening sail on Lake Erie.



Naomi sailing the restored Beetle Cat on a Tuesday test sail with the BMC.

Despite its urban shoreline Buffalo's harbor has its charms for small boats.



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JGTSCA Regatta at Avery Point

By Ellie Czarnowski

We had a lot of fun sailing, rowing and paddling on July 19. Karen and Bill Rutherford made the day by fitting a donated sail to the *Nina* on short notice. Andy Strode and crew finished the rigging before the group wheeled her down to the beach. What a productive day it was! We even had a submarine join the regatta.

Others who joined in the fun were Rob Pittaway who assisted in rigging, Jim Clark who helped launch and retrieve boats, Tom Clark with his lapstrake Catspaw dinghy, Phil Behney who brought a rowing peapod, Stan Greg who brought a sailing dinghy he is refurbishing and Brian and Judy Cooper who brought their beautiful sea kayaks. We even got Brian to try his hand at rowing and sailing.

Thank you Brian for the pictures. And a big thank you to UCONN at Avery Point for allowing us the use of their beach just down from our boathouse.



The View from the Deck

The view from the deck in late summer was one of a lazy, hazy summer day with temperatures climbing towards the 90s. Thank goodness for that light southwest breeze off the river, let's remember days like this come February. We hoped that you were out rowing, sailing and enjoying your traditional small craft, or at least a modern version thereof. In addition to our own Regatta our members have been traveling far afield and more opportunities are coming up.

Bill Armitage took the club's modified Herreshoff skiff, *Susan B. Holland*, on an extended cruise up the Hudson River with an internet friend from New Zealand. We look forward to hearing about that adventure on our very own tidal estuary, following in the wake of the Dutch explorers in a future program.

Karen and I traveled north to Maine to participate in the Small Reach Regatta on Eggemoggin Reach near Brooklin, Maine. *WoodenBoat* has an excellent YouTube video of the event narrated by Senior Editor Tom Jackson. The event was all it was cracked up to be, the Maine TSCA arranged for exclusive use of a brand new camp-



ground at Reach Knolls and exclusive use of the launch ramp and a mooring field at Atlantic Boat on Herrick Bay.

It was rough, we met daily after a catered breakfast to select an island to cruise to, got a ride out to our moored boat, sailed/rowed to the island to enjoy a box lunch, then had to make it back for happy hour and a catered barbecue. After dinner a mix of participants and locals broke out their fiddles, flutes, pipes and harp (yes, one Irish harp) to play the sun down with Celtic music around a bonfire. We repeated this for three days before pulling out and heading home. Great folks, great time and beautiful boats, all our and sail.



Traditional Boat of the Month Nina



The Traditional Small Craft of the Month this month is our own *Nina*. Those readers who have been following this newsletter for a while have had the opportunity to follow *Nina*'s build from being in frame to planking to flip and finish. With this report we had completed her rig and launched her as a sailboat at our club Regatta held in July at the beach at Avery Point. The photo is of Andy Strode at the helm on her maiden sail.

Nina is a 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' flat bottomed skiff that designer John Atkin described as a "flat bottomed catboat." Her dimensions are 11'4" overall (ours came out more like 11'6" with Andy's carved oak "icebreaker" stem), breadth of 4'7" with and a 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " draft. Atkin designed her to "carry a cargo of two heavy persons nicely, or three average size youngsters" and to be "a boat that will sail safely in rough, windy weather in confidence and with lots of fun. When the wind is more than she can handle in safety and comfort, a small outboard engine will urge her along in good style."

We can attest that she is seaworthy and stable. Her overhangs are modest, as is her flare, and that third strake gives one extra confidence when heeling to a gust. Her relatively tall transom could accept a small outboard or, perhaps better, a small electric trolling motor.

Her rig is modest as well, being smaller than, for example, a Beetle Cat's (77sf vs 110sf) but moved her right along in the modest breeze we had at the Regatta. The mast is unstayed so it is easy to step and unstep. The gaff and boom are relatively short for a catboat, at 6'6" and 9'6" respectively with minimum overhang at the stern and both fit inside the boat for travel. The mast is a little less than 14' so needs some padding to travel but can be easily raised. We rigged her similar to the Beetle Cats with which we are familiar at the Seaport Boathouse and both halyards are easy to raise and lower. The sheet is easy to hand and not intended to be cleated off. However, we yielded to temptation and included a cleat, just for securing at the mooring, you understand.

The plans show a sail designed to be a simple "up and down" cut with the seams running parallel to the leech. One of the photos in Atkin's book, however, shows her cruising along under a mitre cut sail with diagonal

seams. We designed an “up and down” sail for *Nina*, but with the sailing season upon us our sail sewer, Karen Rutherford, opted for re-cutting an existing sail rather than sew a new one. That choice was greatly assisted by Jim McGuire donating one of his used Bee-ble Cat sails. In addition to being available, it was also mitre cut! A beautifully sewn sail, it gave Karen pause to break out the shears and make the first cut.



When we spread the sail on Karen’s new attic floor and marked *Nina*’s measurements we were surprised to find we could leave the luff as is and just shorten the head and foot, 2½’ and 3½’ respectively. The result was to trim the sail just inside the line of battens. Thankfully *Nina*’s sail design did not call for battens. After that it was “merely” retaping the leech and reinforcing the corners. Karen’s zig zag sewing machine just made it through the four layers of cloth.

We finished the sail the night before Regatta day so it was with some trepidation that we fit it to the spars the morning of the Regatta. In the photo Andy Strode and Ellie Czarnowski lace on the sail as George Spragg and Ellie’s dog supervise. We improvised with what fittings were in the boathouse and raised sail.

We were pleasantly surprised at how well she sailed. She leans just over so far and then takes off. A tribute to her designer as well as lead boat builder George Spragg and his team, the Wednesday team, Andy Strode, Rob Pittaway and your Editor, the rudder, John Symons, the centerboard and its case, Bruce Cresser as well as the entire membership of the Chapter on Friday nights for boat flipping, sanding and advice.

All in all, a fun boat to sail or row around a harbor on a warm summer’s evening. Or, if the kids beat you to it, a safe, steady boat for them to go exploring or have adventures. Plans are available from Pat Atkin at atkin-boatplans.com.

Fair Winds, Mr Cleat

Feedback

We chased down Mr Cleat and here is his reply to Bryan Wilson of New Zealand concerning Phil Bolger’s “Harbinger” design:

“We have enjoyed our Bolger Harbinger for 32 years now and consider her a great boat. We are set to take her on yet another road trip. Built in the center of the Great American Desert, *Cactus Wren* has sailed San Francisco Bay, the West Coast of Florida as well as lakes, rivers and bays in between. We raised two girls camp cruising and traveling to meets like the Mid Atlantic Small Craft Festival on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay. She ghosts along in lake zephyrs and blows to windward under shortened sail in places like Muscongus Bay, Maine.

But enough name dropping, she rows well with 10’ sweeps. She did not get a motor (electric) for 15 years. She sailed better with a deeper rudder until I knocked it off on a rock, but now does fine with a shortened rudder with an end plate, as shown on the plans. Matter of fact, every time I introduce an “improvement” I end up going back to Bolger’s design. “One of my best efforts, I think” Bolger once replied.

We cold molded the hull with three layers of western red cedar with epoxy saturated 6oz fiberglass inside and out. Thirty two years later she does not leak a drop. We added a small cuddy to shield my very blond daughter from the Florida sun, it now collects spare anchors, life vests and buckets of stuff. I enclose a recent picture of her under sail.

Over the years I added some halyard blocks for mechanical advantage and just completed a lighter birds mouth mast. The concept of stuffing the boom and gaff under the seat and rowing home is not as convenient as advertised, what with the boom and gaff being 16’ and 13’ respectively. That being said, I did do just that recently, including the mast, so I could sneak under a railroad bridge to get back to the marina for some rudder repairs, but next morning there certainly was a tangle of lines.”



More Correspondence

For you power boaters out there, this interesting correspondence was received by our President Ellie:

“Ellie, I found you online with the Traditional Small Craft Association. I built a 26’ Hammond Power Dory from John Gardner’s book 15 years ago. I used a 10hp Sabb Diesel engine for power. The weight of the engine with its large flywheel seemed to fit the hull perfectly. The Sabb came with a veritable/reversible pitch prop which makes driving the boat a breeze. I thought your club might be interested in this type of hull.



I visited with Sharon Brown at Mystic during construction. I was lucky enough to be in New York on business at the time (1999). She was very kind to give me the full tour including the warehouses. She assisted in writing many of the books for John.

I built her knowing her kind were extinct. I wanted to learn how she handled and if the

claims of speed were true. As you can see, the hull is extremely slippery and economic. I get about four to five hours out of a gallon of fuel. I installed a 24 gallon fuel tank with concerns that Diesel is not available on Lake Coeur d’Alene. My worries were unnecessary as I have only use two to three gallons per season. She is fast for a boat that was designed 120 years ago. She is slow by modern standards, but handles like a WWII destroyer. She has a beautiful square wake and knives through wakes without bucking.

Rann Haight, Architect



Building Skin-on-Frame Double Paddle Canoes



HILARY RUSSELL

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Norumbega's 2016 WCHA Assembly Project

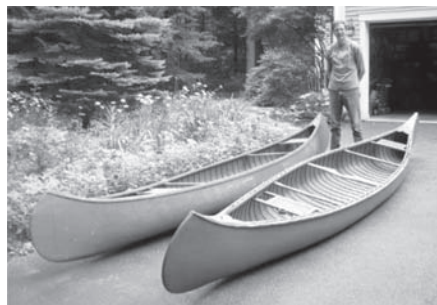
The 2016 WCHA Assembly is slated to be the year of the Kennebec with canoes from the Kennebec Canoe and Boat Company of Waterville, Maine, featured. Kennebecs from all over the country will be at Paul Smith's. Thanks to the efforts of Benson Gray, we have obtained not one, but two interesting Kennebec canoes. One was made in 1911 and the other was made in 1924. The 1911 canoe is what we have been calling a Morris/Kennebec hybrid. It has the splayed cedar stems just like a Morris but it was made in the Kennebec factory.

Our Chapter plan now is to restore the 1911 canoe. It is in pretty decent shape and will not be quite as big a deal as the Robertson was. The stems are solid, the inwale tips may need a few inches of new wood, it only needs a few new ribs and the planking isn't bad. New seats, rail caps and outwales will make her look nice.

The first step will be the stripping of the old varnish on the interior, and that work is in progress now so when we have our first work session that will be behind us. We can do some of the work outside before the snow starts to fly, maybe get her in canvas and filled before Christmas, let the filler cure in January and February. While the filler is curing we can think about the seats, rail caps and outwales.

The stem bands are going to be fun, the Kennebec calls for the stem bands to be riveted in place. They used round head copper rivets and a copper washer. Anybody have a source for these rivets? All work sessions will be here at the canoe shop, 9 Doris St, Groveland.

The 1924 canoe is also quite interesting, it is a 17' Kineo Special in need of a full restoration. The Kineo Special is now for sale, if we can get \$400 for it that will go a long way toward buying canvas, filler and paint to complete the project. It has its good points and a few bad points. It has been fiberglassed, but it appears that the 'glass will peel right off. The outwales are shot, the inwales have been repaired and could be used as they are, but a real fussy restorer would replace them. It has a mast step and there are a pair of gudgeons on the stern. The carrying yoke is obviously an add on.



Benson Gray with the two Kennebec canoes. The one on the left is the 1911 Charles River "1915" model that was made from 1911 until 1920. The other one is the Kineo Special, a model that appeared in the Kennebec catalog for years. As you can see both of these canoes are in pretty good shape for their age.

Norumbega Chapter WCHA News

The Southern New England Chapter of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, Ltd

By Steve Lapey

Why does summer always go by so fast? It seems like yesterday we were anxiously waiting for the weather to get decent enough for paddling and now we are expecting the leaves to start turning.

Assembly 2015

This year's Assembly was held once again at Paul Smith's College in Paul Smith's, New York, from July 14 until Sunday, July 19. The weather cooperated and, except for a couple of quick showers, it was all sunshine and light winds, just enough for the canoe sailors to do their thing. Norumbega was well represented by Gary and Diane Amirault, Bob Benedict, Bill Conrad, Stuart Fall, John Fitzgerald, Benson Gray, Kathy Klos, Steve Lapey, Dan Miller, Macky Mongold and Patty McCloskey, Ed Moses, Greg Nolan and Deborah Gardner, Greg and Shelly O'Brien.

Morris canoes were featured at this year's Assembly and there were almost 50 on display. The evening program on Wednesday featured Kathy Klos sharing her incredible knowledge of the Morris family and how they came to be the premier makers of fine wooden canoes from 1890 until 1920 when the factory burned.



Our Robertson project canoe was the Queen of the Show at the auction, receiving all sorts of compliments before and during the bidding. What we really needed was a few more bidders with deep pockets, there were only a few active bidders and the canoe went to the high bidder for \$1,800, not as much as I would have liked, but it was 100% profit for the WCHA. Once again, a big round of thanks to everyone who contributed time and money to this project. The Robertson canoe was the final item at the Auction.

The 1940 Old Town that was donated to us also went to Assembly, it went out as a raffle item and it generated the sale of hundreds of raffle tickets. The winners were a nice couple from Wisconsin. It was his birthday and they both were extremely thrilled with his special birthday present. They were first time attendees at Assembly and I think we will see them again, even though it is an 18 hour drive for them.



Macky Mongold brought a 16' Morris canoe all the way from Florida for us to canvas at Assembly. Macky, Ed Moses, Greg Nolan and Greg O'Brien along with your Editor, all pitched in and in front of a large audience we had the canvas on and ready for a return trip south where it will be finished up. We had to do the canvassing with the hull upside down on a picnic table with the canvas stretched between two automobiles. A little awkward, but in true Norumbega fashion we got the job done.



Gary and Diane Amirault with their Morris in the paddle by. This was their first Assembly.

Ed Moses dickering for an early Morris, serial #77. He didn't buy it, the lady decided to keep it, not sell it.





Morris canoes were the featured builder at this year's Assembly.

At the Assembly, as happens every few years, the board of Directors elected a new President, usually for a term of three years. This year Norumbega's own Greg Nolan was chosen to replace outgoing President Ken Kelly. Greg has been on the board, most recently serving as the Vice President, and he is an ideal choice for this position. Greg's background in business and law will serve him and the organization well in his term. He will serve only two years as President due to the term limits rule that was instituted a few years ago. Board members can only serve two three year terms under the current rules.



Greg Nolan and Deborah Gardner paddling the 590lb Old Town.



Keewaydin #36 made a return trip to Paul Smith's.



Kathy Klos spent much of her time at Assembly explaining the features of Morris canoes.



Shelley and Greg O'Brien checking out another Morris.

A big thanks is due to Ken Kelly for the great job he has done leading the organization for the past six years. Well done!



Ken Kelly in his long deck Morris in the paddle by.



Cole and Michelle moving right along in the little Trapper. This Old Town was ordered from the factory with almost every possible option, outside stems, rub rail, two tone paint, a floor rack and anything else they could fit onto it. With all these options it is a long way from a 50 Pound Special.



John, Erin and Sue Fitzgerald making use of all 18' of the big E.M. White canoe. Once these 18 footers get moving they can cover a lot of river in a short time.

Father's Day on the Sudbury and Concord Rivers

Father's Day came early this year and as a result some of us had a two day celebration, Saturday with the canoes and Sunday with the family. The weather forecast for Sunday, June 21, was for rain and thunderstorms all day, so the decision was made to do the trip on Saturday instead. A wise move as the forecast proved to be correct and Sunday would have been a washout. The notice for the change in date went out Thursday evening leaving very little time for folks to change their plans. A few members were able to alter their plans and we had a nice little fleet of wooden canoes on the river.

Leading the parade, the Queen for the Day, was our Robertson project canoe. Launched for the first time, the old girl felt right at home on the water. Mike Clark was the winner of the drawing to be the one to paddle her and he was joined by Roger Andrews who volunteered to be his bowman for the trip. The Robertson proved to be a stable, comfortable and fast canoe. So fast that Mike and Roger were ahead of everyone else, even Fitz in the 18 1/2' E.M. White. Others along for the day included John and Erin Fitzgerald and Erin's grandmother, Sue, from Rangeley, Maine, paddling the E.M White.

Greg and Shelly O'Brien paddled the 1915 17' B.N. Morris while Cole O'Brien and Michelle used the 15' Old Town Trapper. Your Editor and Miss Deborah used the 16' Prospector from Stevens Canoe Works. The Prospector was laughing at the light load in it, there was enough freeboard for another half a ton of cargo. These things have an amazing capacity!



Miss Deborah relaxing in the Prospector on the Sudbury River.



Roger Andrews in the bow with Mike Clarke doing stem duty for the Robertson's maiden voyage.



Even this great blue heron was happy to share his river with the Norumbega fleet of wooden canoes.



Canoes on the shore just downstream from the Old North Bridge, part of the National Park in Concord. Several tourists visiting the park took time to look at and chat about the pretty wooden canoes.

On August 9 we returned to the Charles River in Auburndale to paddle in the area of the old Norumbega Park. Once again we took advantage of the new boat launching site on Woerd Avenue in Waltham where there is a nice dock, perfect for getting in and out of courting canoes. From the boat launch it is a short paddle to the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and the site of the old Norumbega Park and the Totem Pole Ballroom.

Chuck and Diane Cossaboom have a home right on the river in Auburndale and they generously hosted us all to a lawn party complete with food and drinks on their front yard facing the river. Their home was originally the Wabewawa Canoe Club, built in the late 1800s. Wabewawa is a Native American word meaning "White Goose," the Wabewawa canoeists won a lot of canoe races on the Charles River.



It was a beautiful day on the Charles River and the Cossaboom's home was a perfect place for the event.

The Charles River

We had nine canoes, 17 people and two dogs show up for this event and with Chuck tending the grille no one went home hungry.

Chuck and Diane were first on the water in their courting canoe, it is a long deck model with exquisite birdseye maple decks and coamings from an unknown Charles River builder. Gary and Diane Amirault came with their early Morris from Peabody. Roger Andrews took time off from his courting canoe project to see us off at the Woerd Avenue launching area and Wayne Campbell travelled from Lebanon, Maine, to his old home town of Auburndale to paddle on familiar waters. Marshall McKee and her dog, Sky, helped Wayne paddle his home built yellow canoe.

Stuart Fall brought his 16 footer made by Jeanne Bourquin in Minnesota. How does Stuart keep that white canoe so clean? John and Erin Fitzgerald were joined by Sadie the dog in the 1915 Old Town Ideal, the ideal canoe for the Charles River. When you have a 100 year old canoe usually it is the oldest boat on the river, but Howard and Eileen Herman-Haase showed up from Medford with one of the oldest Morris's known. It was built sometime between 1894 and 1899, prior to when they started putting serial number tags on the canoes.

Steve and Debbie paddled their Kingsbury courting canoe, or Steve paddled while Debbie sat facing the stem in the correct courting canoe manner. Ed Howard was

joined by Cynthia Henderson in the modern Kingsbury made by Kevin Martin on the original Kingsbury form.



Cynthia Henderson and Ed Howard enjoying lunch on the lawn.



Larry Meyer joined us for most of the day using his 17' Chestnut Prospector. At one point he was seen taking a phone call while sitting in the canoe at the Cossaboom's dock.

Salem Maritime Festival

Once again we were invited to participate in the Salem (Massachusetts) Maritime Festival and we took the opportunity to seek out new members for the WCHA. The WCHA has announced a new program for enlisting new members at boat shows and similar events. We will offer half price memberships for the first year for folks who sign up and pay at one of these events. This is for new members only. At Salem we signed up three new WCHA members, two from our area and one from Pennsylvania who was vacationing here. As usual, at the Festival we chatted with the public and passed out WCHA literature and generally had a fun day.

Gary Amirault, Ted Harrigan, Steve Hodge and Larry Meyer were joined by new member Howard Herman-Haase along with Eileen Herman-Haase, both from Medford. Howard and Eileen brought their early Morris that has been in their family for years. The Morris pre dates those with serial numbers, it is believed to be from 1894 to 1899.



Canoes on display at Salem. The one at the rear is the early Morris, the one in the center is our 1911 Kennebec, the new Norumbega project canoe for 2016. The sail rig on the other canoe always serves to attract attention at the Festival.

A couple years back I wanted to make scarphed joints on some rails. I always have a hard time finding material long enough for the rails so I built a very simple jig so my scarphs always came out straight.

I have a small table saw. It is a 7" Craftsman dating back to the early '40s. This saw has guide slots on both side of the blade. I sawed some hardwood strips that fit nicely into these slots and glued them onto a chunk of plywood about three fourths of the size of the saw table. I did this operation with the strips set into the table top so I knew they would fit and slide properly.

When the glue had cured well I attached two cross pieces made of some oak that I had. These pieces were screwed through the plywood and set at a 90° angle to the saw blade. These two pieces were taller than the maximum cut the saw could make. I then ran the entire assemble through the saw, cutting the plywood into two pieces. The oak cross pieces were also cut up to the maximum height that the 7" blade could reach. There was still enough oak to hold the thing together as seen in the photos. I then added another piece set at about a 6/1 angle. This piece would be the guide for the work

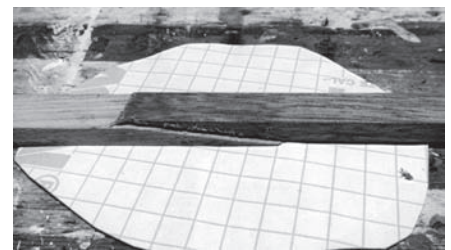


The tool worked well. I have made many parts with it in the couple years since I built it. The photo showing two dissimilar woods shows how neat this thing works.



By Mississippi Bob A Scarphing Jig

I soon found a couple of problems with this tool. The first problem was that it was limited by the small size of my saw and the " thickness of its base. This limited the available height that the saw could cut. It was fine for the rails that I made for the small boats that I build but it still limited what the tool could do. Another more serious problem was the guide piece left my fingers dangerously close to the spinning saw blade. I soon learned to clamp the work with a spring clamp as shown on the photo.

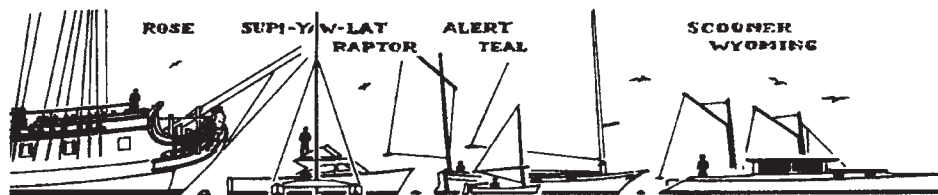


I have a problem with one of my boats, the *Pickup Squared*. It didn't give me enough headroom after I got the sail balance worked out. I came to realize that I made the mast too short. That's a shame, too, because I had sawed off a foot when I made it. Now how to put that foot back on became my next new problem. Maybe, just maybe, I could scarph on the extra wood on the top. Reason told me that the strain would not be nearly as strong at the top of the stick so that is where I will add it on.

Now this leads me to another new project, a new improved scarphing jig. Maybe I will do it right this time. The new jig is really much simpler. I am only using one guide slot for this jig. The work will sit flat on the saw table giving me much more depth that I can cut. This jig also has a much longer guide piece that will allow me to hold the work much further from the spinning saw blade. I think that this should really work out well.



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Folks messing about in working craft out of working ports need a range of, at times, quite impressive tools to keep their commercial businesses going. A set of simple to quite complex tools exists around the periodic need to look and work under the craft without diving, if not to lift the craft out of the water to do maintenance, repairs, even eventually piece by piece scrapping. In fact, well before any of that, boats have often begun their life being built using such arrangements to build them where they can then be moved towards the high tide to float that new hull into its working life.

Likely the earliest way of looking under boats without getting soaked would be to use the tides in your favor, assuming you have tides of enough vertical movement to make this work.



Picture #1 shows one ancient, very low tech and cost free way still used here in Gloucester to quickly get a first understanding of what might be going on since earliest days, whether you take a peek at your rudder, or check whether that hard bump forward might have gouged the planking some, or just why the prop vibrates suddenly. Many such setups also have a sturdy grid for a somewhat more predictable settling of the hull's keel with the ebb and perhaps additional bracing through legs to keep wind forces, for instance, from having the hull fall the wrong way.

Brought in at high tide, she's tied to lean against the wall while the tide goes out to reveal her dripping but fully accessible underbody for perhaps the next three to four hours. This may be enough time to pull the prop for some tender care with a specialist across a tide or two, replace an anode or check why the cutless bearing felt odd running. And if a through hull is leaking and you know that you can get the work done in time, now's the time to tighten things up again with a helper on the other end of the assembly.

Again, once you have usefully large enough tides for this, you would not need that wall to lean against. Then again, Phil's *Resolution* (Design #312) went up and down with the tides from her various mud berths well

over 11,000 times, yes 11K! So he could try to look at all sorts of things below her waterline without getting wet, unless he stood there for a few hours too many, or it rained.

In terms of more specialized dedicated geometries, here in Gloucester, like pretty much anywhere else actually, everything likely started with marine railways, gently sloping setups often taking advantage of the natural slope of a given well protected shoreline. Initially with timbers and later steel for tracks, cradles, finger piers left and right, plus massively geared down manpower turning a vertical axis capstan, or a train of oxen doing the same, to pull boats up that ramp and thus out of the water. Gloucester is, in fact, home to America's oldest continuously operating marine railway located in the heart of the Inner Harbor on what is now called Harbor Loop.

To haul any sizable hull, the obvious thing usually was, and is, to prepare the (ballasted!) cradle at low tide with blocking to support the incoming hull and adjustments to the uprights to match the arriving hull's configuration. At high tide the boat would be floated in, secured to the cradle, which was then winched uphill, be it with grease between track and cradle or iron or steel rollers placed and replaced as the combined load crept up the slope. The vital braking function to control the movement of that load would likely be primarily in the capstan mechanism. And, interestingly enough, in small and very large railways, even in massive dry docks, a lot of big timber blocks and beams continue to remain in effective use.



However, to haul this particular hull out, none of this well proven historic infrastructure mattered. Instead, Rose's Marine Service in Gloucester offers two modern ways to lift hulls. Picture #2 shows the lifting table/platform with a nominal rating on each of its four winch towers of 150 tons, or 600 tons combined gross, minus that platform's weight, age of the system, changes in gravity. Here *Miss Trish*, one of the largest local ground fish stern draggers, is in for another routine bottom inspection, minor repairs, perhaps a prop or shaft reconditioning, plus a lot of bottom paint and anodes to keep that steel happy and smooth. But no need for this size tool either on my project.

We'd use Rose's second option, with which every more moderate scale hull gets hauled, a moderate capacity travel lift, one of those typically blue painted machines able to lift, move about the yard and usually even weigh the given hull. The process is simple enough.



Picture #3: I show up well before the yard gets active and tie up next to a small dragger who'd just be getting some welding done tied to the concrete float.



Picture #4: It's my turn and I line her up to enter that gap between the fishing craft, to position her fore and aft and left and right for reasonable balance when she gets lifted with those wide, well padded nylon straps. Dave, the yard manager, observing from that piling, had not yet seen the hull running nor out of the water. We are on good productive terms, essential to get done what we were about to initiate.



Picture #5: This is how I got to ride the boat upwards by perhaps 20+ feet before Dave stops her ascent to let me get off her via the bow gate. Thrill seekers would not even look at this ride, and they'd balk at the ticket price.



Picture #6: Dave gets to study the shape and I get to inspect her wet black belly as she reaches "cruising altitude."



Picture #7 confirms the expected approximate weight of her, about 8,400lbs with full 200 gallon fuel load (1,200lbs+), trim weights to learn about her behavior, weight of actual and simulated gear etc, overall a conservative approach reflected in these numbers of 4,500 and 3,900lbs per sling. Bare hull finished but without engine, fuel or batteries, thus a bit under 6,000lbs.



Picture #8 after an hour's hanging in the slings while we set up our work at the far end of the yard, the sun has come out and she is flying through the yard at well above head height just only at ambling speeds. Yard workers and fishermen working on their projects can't help but at least sneak a peek, none that I know of have built a 39' boat. In fact, she appears to be the first of that length built in Gloucester in over three decades? Past a rich mix of hull types built in all sort of materials, we are on final approach to one major item on her test schedule.



Picture #9: Moment of truth, face to face with a standard ISO-40'x8'x8'6" container.



Picture #10: And she should fit, unless I misunderstood something. Whatever else may not work, at least we have the container floor prepped with axle grease in line with her 4' wide centerline keel and both 4" wide skegs. No room for rollers, cradles or other precious techno doodads, designing her I had wanted as much boat as would fit in that box. And that Navy man stood 6'5" tall.



Picture #11: Having just sighted matters up close, Richard, the seasoned travel lift driver, begins to ease her in. Now that she is indeed aligned with the box, we'll attach two lines of $\frac{3}{4}$ " nylon braid to that 2" strap through her bow cockpit freeing ports, likely the strongest place to pull on her when the time comes to reverse her out of the box again.



Picture #12: The view from the helm now halfway in, as she is self guiding her progress ever deeper using her rubber rub-rails. Soon it is time to stop, slack the forward strap, pull the connecting pin between the two and retract them upwards out of the way. The bow now rests on her keel, ready to slide further forward on that 6" smear of grease.



Picture #13: And here the view inside over the bow cockpit. The US Navy had allowed a 24 hour rigging period to get her ready for the container either way. I preferred to just take that 35lb delta off the davit to come within 39'5" maximum internal room for this boat. With the hook placed in the bow cockpit, she does need about 39'1".



Picture #14: Richard has about 2" to spare all around. And between the machine's steering, her speed control and the strap winch control, he steadily moves the boat forward exactly where she belongs. Now only using the rear strap to hold her weight (4,500lbs!) he has the machine slowly crawl ahead with the rear strap pulling the hull into the hull while the 3,900lbs on her forward keel slide on that centerline grease. Remarkably, no need to correct things by backing her out a bit or repositioning the travel lift. Boat and travel lift under perfect control by this guy who'd never done this sort of stunt. He just knows his tool, sees the geometries and will not screw things up. I built most of her and he won't break her.



Picture #15: Boss of the whole enterprise, Frank Rose, barely pretends offering advice, no doubt gratified that his specialist has things well in hand. But without Frank's curiosity about this whole idea, there would have been little chance of this exercise ever happening to risk clogging up his yard's work flow with that box, the boat and the travel lift sprawling over 80' in length in the middle of everything. For instance, no tractor trailer rig could have made any deliveries. Minding those big mirrors though, the Mug-Up truck slides through just fine with vital supplies of coffee, donuts and sandwiches, priorities are priorities. Almost time to drop that rear sling as well.



Picture #16: With that done, now just a gentle shove with that forklift against one side of her stern extension and she is in.



Picture #17: Just about done. And whether carried by truck, train or ship, this boat in that container won't be able to hurt herself moving about much, traveling to places near or very far, with grease on the skids below and rubber rub rails all around.

So, one more serious must do successfully executed. One vital project attribute proven in the affirmative and now off my testing schedule. Frank calmly remarks that he'd never had a moment's doubt that she'd slide right in. A mechanical engineer working on his massive steel 56 footer nearby volunteers that from his perspective numbers and plans are all nice and well, but testing things and documenting the realities encountered



Picture #18: Jay, one of *Gadabout's* co owners, with hand on the closing door confirms the fact that she indeed fits inside a standard 40' container, be it just for local storage over a hard New England winter or to support an itinerant life style, with boring tedious or dangerous stretches between fabulous cruising grounds readily bridgeable by sliding her into a 40 footer and sending her by truck, train or ship. Incidentally, the numbers on that right door are interesting indeed! The steel box weighs about as much as the boat inside it in wet condition.

are essential. And Jay sure likes what his boat was capable of.

Perhaps a few mischievous onlookers may have lost a bet about the odds. Indeed, quite some folks had projected little optimism that the project would ever mature towards completion or work for that matter. And while it did indeed take way too long to get her to run, *MAIB* readers have been exposed to more about the whys and hows than they ever expected! This day's exclamation mark was set in full public view as well. And right in the most important yard in what remains America's Oldest Seaport.

Quiet Man Yard Manager Dave, who had lifted her out earlier, had barely expressed explicit interest in any of the proceedings, just noticing smooth progress as he went about following his day's schedule. With this unorthodox episode concluded without bad dramatics, odds are that I'll be able to poke around that yard some more.

After lunch with Jay, *Gadabout* was out of the container again and back in the waters of the Inner Harbor on her way home to her mud berth in West Gloucester. Later that afternoon some really used up sweaty T shirts, my stash of rags is running low, sacrificed themselves for the cause by soaking up those grease tracks on the floor of the container. Next morning the box was gone, on to another gig.

Certainly, should a travel lift not be available there would be more primitive ways get her in and out of the box. Wherever the box is dropped, reasonably level ground or a smooth grade, a truck with a stout winch, saplings for rollers, box and boat more or less aligned with the truck would be needed. One crude and effective way would be to punch at least a 2"-3" hole on winch axis height on centerline on that forward box end, position the truck right behind it, pay out the cable through that hole until its eye can be shackled to that nylon strap through her bow cockpit. Then just cranking in on that winch should be a safe and predictable procedure until the boat is almost snug against the inside of that steel wall. Then close the door. Matching that rough and ready approach the same steel just cut out earlier would be welded tight into that that opening.

Whichever method would be used, of serious help is the fact that whether pulled in or out, with travel lift or by winch, the craft can be entered over her low motorboard/transom, providing access forward all the way up against her bow gate to check on progress. And should she be in the box without it, this also allows introducing that nylon strap through the forward freeing ports to set up those pull out ropes. At any rate, whatever is wrong with this casual thinking here, you'll find out.

More to come.

One sees an interesting tool from time to time that fills a unique slot in making or fixing things. The most recent instance for me is a battery powered press fitting tool (manufactured by Viega) that can be used by an individual to join various types of pipe without welding or the like. The picture shows the person joining two rather large pipes. No idea how well it would work on the pipes we have on most recreational boats.

One of the nice features of many of the new portable electronic devices is access to the Web and the various weather reporting sites that are available. Before such devices were around it was "local" knowledge that kept most of us out of trouble on the water. If the storm was in such and such a position on the horizon, it would miss us. If it was in another position, we had better get ready for wind and rain. During the summer months it was the squall lines that were of particular interest. Now we can call up the local weather radar on our handheld device and see what is out there and which way it is moving. This ability is very nice as long as we are in range of the cell towers or have satellite download capability. Otherwise it is back to "local" knowledge.

Safety interlocks are wonderful devices when they work. Otherwise they are a problem. Granted, we do not want to start the boat's engine when it is in gear, nor start a car in gear (although there are times when such capability with standard shift vehicles is helpful) or any other motorized device. However, when the interlock does not work properly we have a problem. If we are on the water and the interlock to insure the transmission is in neutral fails, we can have a major problem. Elsewhere the interlock failure may just be a nuisance.

What brings this to mind is failure of three different interlocks in the last few weeks. The lawnmower would not start because of an interlock problem. The engine in one of our cars would not start because of a problem (juggling the shift lever got things aligned). And the elevator at our coastal cottage refused to work. In the first two cases I found the problem and got the engine to start and run. In the third case a service technician had to make the trip to the cottage and diagnose the problem. We have an elevator because federal flood rules put the liv-



ing level 25' in the air and climbing the stairs may be good for us, but carrying groceries, etc up two flights is a bit much when we are in our 70s.

Ever had a coil of line jumble when you went to use it? No matter how well the directions were followed to loop the line and secure it, problems may develop when the line is needed. A proposed solution (called the "Loop Conjecture" theory) is to tie the two ends of the line together and then loop the line and secure it with a separate line. The theory is still being tested but you might want to give it a try.

You have your outboard engine(s) on the transom of the boat. That is the usual place as it gets the propulsion out of the way and provide more cockpit space. Another arrangement, used primarily by small net boats, is to have the outboard forward (almost to the bow) to have a clear aft deck space for the net. Then there is a group that is proposing putting one engine forward and one engine aft to improve propulsion, weight distribution and maneuverability. Of course, if shallow water is not a consideration, you might look into the Voith Schneider Propeller (VSP) system. This vertical propeller combines propulsion and steering in one unit.

One of the boating magazines I read had an item on using your fingers to estimate the time before local sunset. According to the article, the width of your outstretched finger, when viewed horizontally, is roughly 15 minutes of sunlight above the horizon in the mid-latitudes (US for instance) or four fingers equals one hour. Since I found this of interest, I went looking for more information and found a website with an explanation and an illustration of the technique ("How to Determine the Remaining Hours or Minutes of Daylight" by Ken Jorgustin, <http://modernsurvivalblog.com>).

In brief, the "horizon" is whatever is west of you as the terrain (or lack thereof) will cut off the direct sunlight when the sun "sets" behind it. To determine the approximate time left until sunset, after putting your sunglasses on, stretch your arm out in front of you toward the sun and bend your wrist so that your palm is facing you and your hand is horizontal with your thumb on top. The bottom of the sun should rest on the top of your index (pointer) finger. If your little finger is on the horizon and the sun is on top of the index finger, you have about 60 minutes of daylight left. If, when you stretch out your hand and turn it over with the sun on top of the index finger and there is space below your little finger, add the other hand and count the fingers above the horizon. If more than two hands, you have at least two hours before sunset. You may need to customize the concept for your latitude location and the size of your fingers. Remember the average for mid latitudes is around 15-18 minutes per finger.

We have all read about the G force experienced by astronauts on take off or by pilots when pulling out of a dive. Both wear special suits to keep them from blacking out from reduced blood to the brain. Well, your boat (and you) also experience G forces when going to windward (vessel coming off a wave or slamming into one) or if you have a fast boat and the water is choppy. The pound, pound, pound calls for flexible padded seats (or for you to stay standing with flexed knees) and well designed electronics. Your boat's electronics are protected from moisture, but how well are they protected from the G forces impacting them?

At one time, I was ready to purchase a sonic transducer to go around the boat's propeller shaft. Its vibrations would keep marine growth off the propeller (or so claimed the manufacturer). I still have the transducer but the electrical side of the product was never sent as the manufacturer ran into G force difficulties when the electronics were installed on the test vessel. Thus the question of "how well are your electronics mounted?"

Have you considered a wire line that floats? I doubt if any of us need any with our small boats, but such exists. It is called Samson's "Saturn 12." You might want to look into this product if you have such a need.

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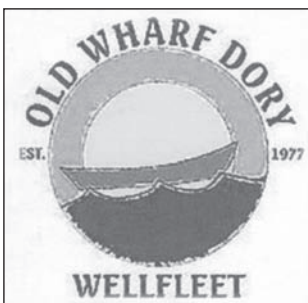
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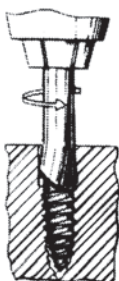
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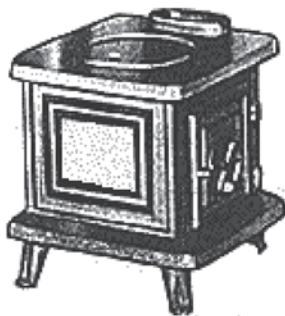
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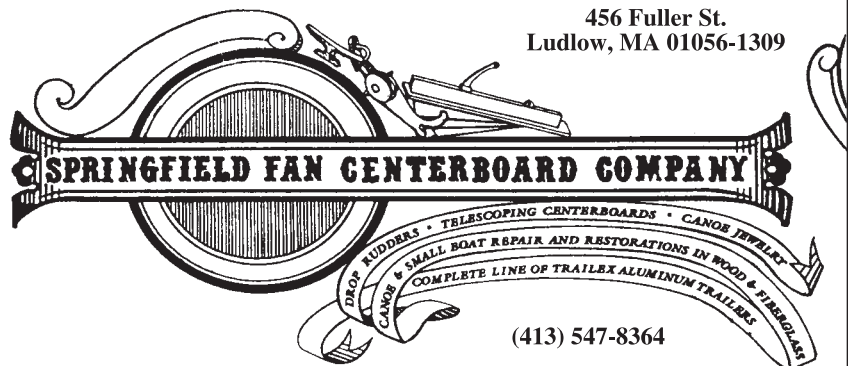
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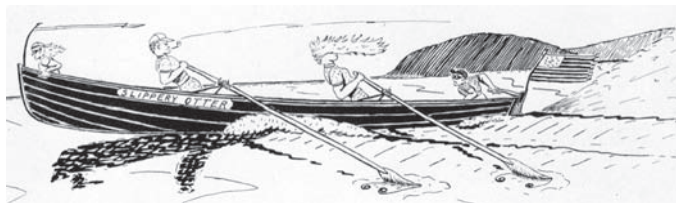
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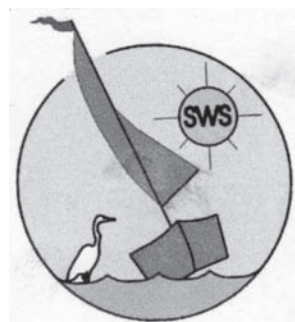
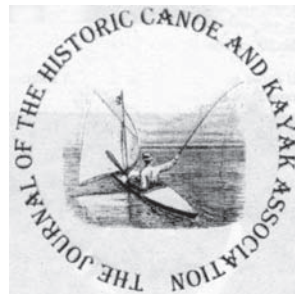
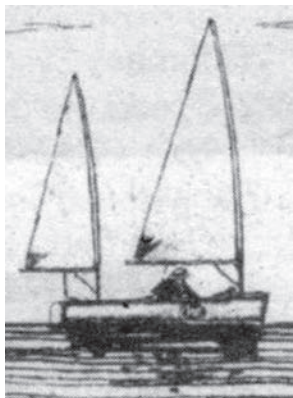
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Thomas Wolfe was wrong.....you CAN go home again.

It all depends on how much of a mess you left behind. I went back....and what a pleasure it was. "Home" being The Adirondack Guideboat Company. This is David writing. I have largely moved to New York City and I am becoming involved with the music business. I still have my house in Vermont, still love being there, but also love being here. It is astonishing how many tools I've stuffed into so tiny an apartment. But a thickness planer? A table-saw? A band saw? No, no and no. A dust-collection-system which has four 55 gallon barrels to catch the dust? Nope. Part of going back to my actual house was to use my workshop. There were things I needed to make that I couldn't reasonably make here.

I also visited the boatshop. I had a list in my pocket of things I needed to make and was about to head off to buy some wood. The guys said, "Why don't you just use our shop?"

What could I say? This wasn't their main facility, this was a dedicated woodshop 15 minutes away. Maybe 30' x 30'. Furnished complete. Still, I needed to get some wood. The guys said, "Why don't you use that?" They pointed to a rack of cherry, for which King Solomon would have lusted. I spent 4 nights working there, probably pushing a mile of cherry through various tools. I am pleased to report, all fingers still intact. The photo on the left is a piece of 6/4 cherry. It weighs a ton. It is 14" wide and 12 feet long. I didn't need it...but I sure admired it. Ok, maybe I caressed it a little. When I asked the boys for current prices on cherry....they looked at me as if I was crazy. Like I was in a restaurant and asked for the price on ketchup. They tell me that they've almost caught up with production, if you want to buy a great boat from great people, you know who to call. Also, this being late August as I write, they say they are about to resume with the kits. (They had to shut that down during the crazy boat buying (and boat building) days of summer. I think they will also limit next season's kit production. You snooze you lose.

